

Luther Blissett

The 104 Day All-Vegetable Diet

A Whole Food Plant-Based Journey

2019

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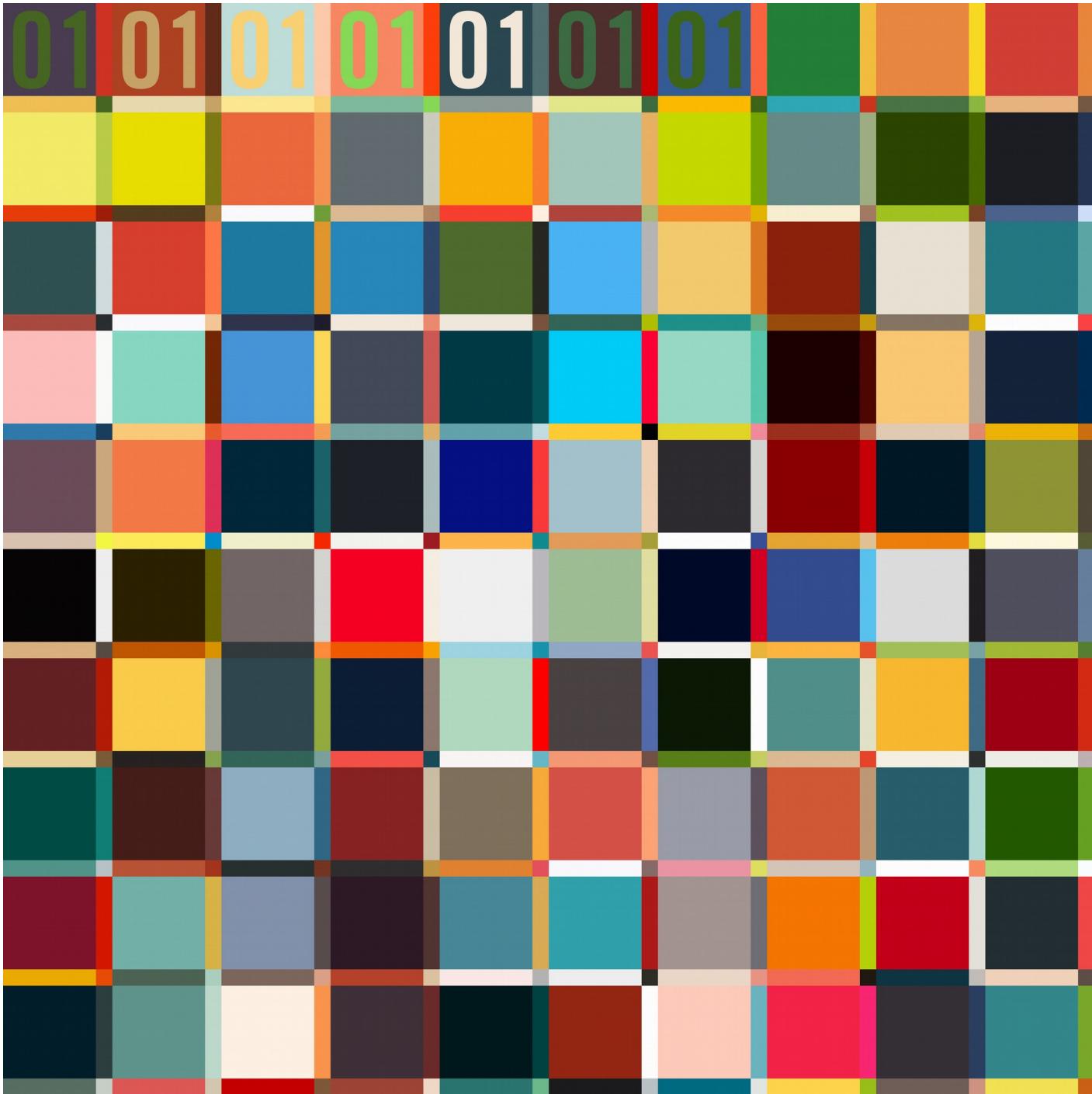
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Getting Started

In 2018 I went on a diet by Ray Cronise called Just Sides and I found it through Penn Jillette who simply calls it “Cray Ray”. It was actually a fad diet from 2015 but I didn’t know that at the time because who the heck follows dieting culture? Not me. This is a week by week account of my experience on this (crazy) diet. If you want to do it and follow along, this will give you something to read every week and some recipes to try.

I started on Wednesday June 13th, 2018 and thought of Wednesdays as the first day of my week. Don’t wait to start on Sunday, start it as soon as possible! Weigh-ins occur weekly. Keep a journal of what you ate, how you felt, and what you weighed. Also consider taking other measurements like your waist size. You will need: a steaming basket, a food processor, a blender, a mandolin slicer, a spice rack, a dutch oven, a loaf pan, baking sheets, and a hot air popcorn maker. Lastly, talk to a doctor before starting this diet – I experienced some dangerous side-effects and you could too.



Week One: Potatoes

"I can do two weeks of potatoes." is what I thought going into it. "Potatoes have lots of nutrients, they're cheap and I'll probably lose weight." Also: "It's just two weeks. that's all. I'll see how it goes." This was my mindset when I started. I was equal parts optimistic and non-committal. I know that some diets work better than others, and everybody's different.

I was inspired by listening to a podcast called *Penn's Sunday School*, where Penn Jillette talked about his success in losing weight. I found a site called *Calorielab* which detailed more precisely the steps that Penn did (from his book *Presto!*), and I thought I'd give it a try. The official *Just Sides* site required me to sign-up and pay for a set of scales and stuff, so there was no way I was going to do that, and getting the free information on *Calorielab* enabled me to go forward on my own. And now you can too!

Before I heard about the diet I was kind of depressed about my weight. I was genuinely wondering how in the world I would lose weight given that I was so sick of the gym. I am still thankful for hearing Penn's inspiring story because of the wonderful outcome. I liked the idea that this diet was kind of like a cult - where I'll be asked to do things 'just because', even though it might not make much sense. And hey, I

always wanted to be in a cult. If you've started the diet, welcome to the cult. Don't tell anyone.

Penn and I have some things in common, like eschewing caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and drugs. so I thought we might be sort of similar, and if we're similar then maybe his diet would work for me like it did for him. Neither of us had to go over those particular humps on a diet, although week one of potatoes still allows all of the above.

I had done only one other diet in my life, and it was a fad thing: the Atkins diet. It had worked well for weight loss, but the secret goal of the diet was to switch me over to vegetables which just didn't happen. It was the wrong sequence of steps to have that outcome -- for me, anyway. I can vividly remember chowing down on a package of baby carrots and not enjoying it very much. Also, I was exercising like a son-of-a-bitch. Stairmaster mostly.

That was 16 years before this diet, and I had gained a lot of weight since then. I ate a whole lot of convenience food in those intervening years, and now I weighed a whopping 233 pounds (and i'm 5' 9" tall.) I refuse to do before/after photos, but I did however take a photo of the scales to commemorate the beginning.

At the start of the diet, a low weight for me would be around 190 -- again with a whole lot of exercise and pain for the gain. Exercise seemed to make it harder to eat responsibly, and my stomach and cravings would roar in an incapacitating sort of way. I didn't think it was incapacitating at the time, but looking back it definitely was.

Back in the Atkins days I was 175 or so, which is still overweight according to the standard body mass index (BMI.) I remember telling friends and family that I wanted to get down to 165, and it never happened.

Penn Jillette lost 105 pounds in 86 days, and if I lost 100 pounds in 86 days I'd be in very bad shape! I don't even have 100 pounds to lose. so yeah, I'll try the same diet and try to lose half that. And according to Penn, I didn't even have to exercise, which sounded great because I was very sick of the gym at the time. I wanted a break, and what I got was like a wonderful vacation.

Being inspired, I started the diet on a whim, and went to the store and bought enough potatoes for two weeks. Breakfast, lunch and dinner. It was a spontaneous lark of two weeks eating just potatoes.

When I say just potatoes, that's what I mean. You can't cook them in oil, you can't add milk to make mashed potatoes. You can't add salt, pepper, or anything to them. It's just potatoes, cooked in any way you wish. Drinking water was right up my alley, but you can still have black coffee and purer alcohol like vodka. You can't have any other vegetable, meat, milk, bread, fruit, nuts or McFriggingDonalds. You can have potatoes and you can have water. Yes it's extreme. No, you don't have to worry about malnutrition because potatoes are very nutritious. (And if you're B-12 deficient you're probably already taking a vitamin for that.)

It was difficult to hide my grin on the first day when I was tucking in to the potatoes. By day 5 I wasn't grinning anymore. My mood was negatively affected in a grouchy, snarly and short-tempered sort of way. If you're doing the diet, this is not permission to be a grouch, but get ready for it because boy-oh-boy it's coming.

Penn Jillette doesn't know what he's talking about when it comes to what happens inside the human gut (and he would agree), but I liked how he described what was going on: The little enzymes that operate on dairy and meat are dying off because they aren't needed anymore and the gut is reacting to that withdrawal. My gut was being reset, retrained to deal with vegetables. Only vegetables. Only potatoes. To

me, this is cult thinking: it was a story that I was taking on faith and it helped. It meshed with other stories I had heard about vegetarians who ate a cheeseburger after 6 months, and their stomach gave them pain because they no longer had enough of those enzymes to process the meat. I have no idea how true it all is, but it certainly sounds like it could be true to a degree. So I went with it. I told myself the diet would get easier -- that this first week was the pain for the gain.

By the morning of day 7 I was sick of potatoes, and pretty unhappy generally, and I only lost 2 pounds, but I was kind of psyched for week 2 because this diet/cult was going to get weirder.



Week Two: More Potatoes + Contrast Showers

Cray Ray is a weird NASA scientist guy who came up with this diet, and he was already into studying the effects of cold water on the human body. So he threw Contrast Showers into his diet – which is alternating 10 seconds hot and 20 seconds cold water, 10 times consecutively. Supposedly there are studies that show this practice “revs up the metabolism”, and that it could actually make me feel better during the worst part of the diet. That first contrast shower had me gasping for air. Wow. I wondered how in the world I would do it every day, but I did. And it got a little easier after day 4 or 5 or so. Also, the cold water in my building wasn’t all that cold which maybe made it easier.

For potatoes, I decided to lessen my intake because I wasn’t losing much weight and I certainly wasn’t enjoying eating them. It was a real chore to stuff that last bit of baked potato into my mouth and chew, so I stopped the gruelling and punishing effort of it. Looking back I can see that I was listening to my body at this critical point, and not simply just trying to eat 3 full meals of potatoes no matter what. It was a natural thing. If you’re full, throw the rest of the potatoes out.

The new rule in week 2 was that I could now add pepper to the potatoes. Yum! Boy did I add a lot it. My favourite cooking method was to slice them up and make fries, which Penn Jillette says is sorta against the rules because you're throwing out the liquid. Sweet potatoes worked well for variety, and those tiny potatoes. So now my gut was accepting potatoes of all kinds and pepper too. The changes in my gut were continuing, or at least I supposed that something was going on.

The potatoes became monotonous again after the novelty of the pepper wore off. By the end of week 2 I didn't want to look at or smell a potato. I lost 6 pounds in week two, mostly because I was eating fewer potatoes, which brought the 2 week total weight loss to 8 pounds which is fairly normal for the all potato diet.

Somehow by the 14 day period I became convinced that the purpose of the 2 weeks of potatoes was not to lose weight but it was to do the Great Gut Reset of 2018. And the initial 14 days was easily the worst period of the diet, and I had accomplished something that has value to my system, so I wasn't about to throw it all away. The weight loss was encouraging and made me think I was on the same path as Penn, however he did lose a lot more in 14 days. If I kept losing weight at this rate I'd could quit and go back to my horrible diet in a few weeks. So you can see that I was of two minds at this stage, chiefly happy about the weight loss, and secondarily happy with the change in my gut. I can't say I was feeling good though - I was still feeling grumpy. Because I lost about a pound a day, I was sold on moving on to Phase Two though, and not bail on this diet.

I did feel good enough to do some light exercise so that I could accelerate the weight loss. I started doing walks halfway through the second week, walking 5.5 km every day no matter what, and then two days a week (normally weekends) I added 13km or so. It was late June so it was a great time of year for walking, so usually the walks were enjoyable. I was watching youtube videos about the importance of getting

Vitamin D, and the walks helped with that and possibly improved my mood a bit. I sweated buckets during those first walks even though it wasn't very strenuous. Other than walking my everyday life was very sedentary. I was definitely hoping that the walking would mean I could reach my target weight early get off this diet sooner. Meanwhile, my weight loss goals were changing as I lost more weight.

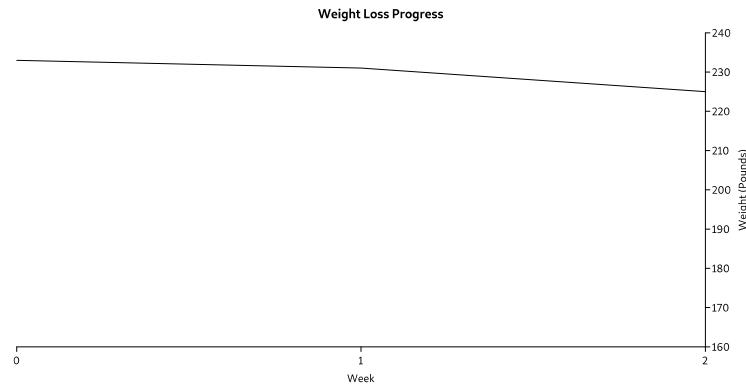
I was watching a youtube channel called *All You Can Vegas* where the host eats at buffets and shows close-ups of the food. I was wistful for the food he was eating, and I'd plan fictitious trips to Las Vegas where I'd eat like a pig. I don't know if this helped or not, but it was what I was watching.

At the end of week two the contrast showers were easy. The alternating between hot and cold was annoying and I was even musing with the idea of doing a 5 minute cold shower. I didn't follow through on that though because this cult has rules! I continued the contrast showers as directed, but I couldn't properly combine cleaning with the contrast shower, so I'd have a regular bath beforehand. On his podcast Penn Jillette would tell about how he figured out how to do the cleaning during the contrast shower and I just have no idea how he does it.

Looking back the greatest sign at the 14 day point was that I was no longer hungry. Before going on this diet I'd have these great pangs of hunger, and now they were gone. It was truly like the beginning of an amazing vacation, an affliction had been lifted, removed, put in a box 20 feet away. Looking back, it's as if those pangs were actually withdrawal symptoms and not hunger at all. Real hunger they say, consists of a watering mouth and a constricting of the throat. Perhaps a noisy gut is a sign of unhealthiness. Anyway I was amazed it was gone, and I dearly hoped it would stay that way.

I spent some time researching Phase Two, trying to figure out what I was going to

eat. The thing about Phase One is there's very little thinking about what to eat (just potatoes... again), and in Phase Two the entire world of vegetables opens up.





Week Three: Any Vegetables I Want

Phase Two means you can eat any vegetables you want for 90 days. So the deal was to eat vegetables and legumes (but primarily vegetables), and keep up the contrast showers and walking. However there was a new element on the first day of week three: the fed window. The fed window is a 4 or 5 hour window of time where you are allowed to eat. I chose noon and an early supper. Because I wasn't hungry anymore it was an easy thing to do. I was eager to eat though -- at a couple of minutes before noon I'd have my salad made and I'd be staring at the clock waiting for it to hit noon. I was very serious about the fed window because the rules of the cult must be followed.

The phase lasts 90 days or shorter, because when you hit your target weight you're supposed to move on to Phase Three which is a maintenance mode diet. When you add the 14 days of potatoes to the 90 days of Phase Two, you get 104 days of an all-vegetable diet.

The final aspect of Phase Two is that it is a reduced calorie phase, which doesn't mean a lot when it comes to vegetables because they aren't high in calories. Cray Ray calls it the 'Wait Loss' phase where you're not even supposed to exercise - you just

wait around and lose the weight. And I believe that will work, even though I was doing the walking (66km a week or so). I looked up my Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) and spent some time on nutrition websites to make sure I had a pretty serious calorie deficit happening. It wasn't very difficult to eat fewer calories because everything I was eating was vegetables.

Look up your BMR now – what you want to know is the amount of calories your body expends just being itself. Look for a site that lets you plug in your height, age, and weight. As your weight goes down over these weeks, revisit the site and get your new BMR.

Day 15 is an important day in the Cray Ray cult and everyone eats the same thing on this day: Corn on the cob. I am lucky that I started the diet at a time of year when corn was in season. I had been primed by Penn's podcast where he said the corn was going to taste like candy. In the prior 14 days my tastebuds had become accustomed to bland potatoes and pepper, and now I had boiled 4 ears of corn and they were sitting on my plate, steaming, without butter or salt. The corn smelled very good, and I had a stupid grin on my face. I bit into the corn and it was an explosion of flavour, and in my incredulity I laughed. It was like a magic trick. Never in my life had I eaten plain corn on the cob, and I couldn't believe how sweet it was. I laughed several times during that meal, shaking my head in disbelief.

For dinner I had 1 and a half cups of a vegetable stew (Dinner #1). It had some potatoes in it that I wasn't too keen on. But there was so much flavour. Not only could I have any vegetable I wanted, but any spice was also okay to have (except salt.) This started a long process of taste-testing a variety of vegetables to see what they tasted like with my new sense of taste. I made an effort to throw away my vegetable taboos (like broccoli, cauliflower, etc), because hey maybe I will like them now.

After 4 days of corn for lunch, I switched to a chopped salad (Salad #1): mushrooms, carrots, cucumber, celery, green pepper, diced tomato, vinegar, Mrs. Dash and Tobasco (the mild one, green bottle.) For whatever random reason, Cray Ray let Penn eat Tobasco sauce, and it's got a small amount of oil and salt in it, and it became a staple of my diet too. The amount of flavour in the salad just blew me away. I stopped using the Mrs. Dash on the salad by mid-week because it was just too much. That salad was my favourite thing ever, except for the corn. I felt fortunate to be able to eat that salad every day. Penn went on to tell stories about how much Tobasco he uses in a month - but he uses the regular Tobasco and not the mild green one.

For as long as I can remember I didn't like mushrooms. As a child I think I just decided I didn't like them and carried it into adulthood. These mushrooms now tasted good enough, and I had to change my stance on them. At first I ate them quickly like I was eating a bug, and I made sure there was a lot of Tobasco on them. Hah. Eventually I just got over it and now I love mushrooms.

By mid-week I was considering that the contrast showers might be making me feel better. But it could have been the wonderful taste of food. I wanted to share the contrast shower thing with a depressed friend but decided against it. The idea of it seems too torturous.

On the last day of week 3 I had rice, broccoli, and peas for dinner. Rice falls into a special grains category in Cray Ray cult diet land. So yeah, it's technically against the rules in Phase Two (not a vegetable or a legume) but this was a celebratory meal. A cheat meal, really. The cult demands that white rice can never be eaten because it's not a whole food, so I went with brown rice which is. Added pepper and Tobasco. My new steamer arrived that day and I used it for the veggies, and steaming became something I do almost every day. Broccoli was another food that I had decided I didn't like as a child, and I'm still not a huge fan of it raw, but when it is steamed it is

absolutely glorious. I laughed out loud again when I had that first steamed floret of broccoli. I was beginning to be almost a bit angry that I had been missing out on these foods.

For steaming I was using a cheapo stainless steel unfolding steaming basket that can fit inside any pot. It didn't last very long until it broke, and I switched to a silicone steaming basket. Do yourself a favour and invest in a good steaming solution, because many vegetables attain their maximum flavour when steamed.

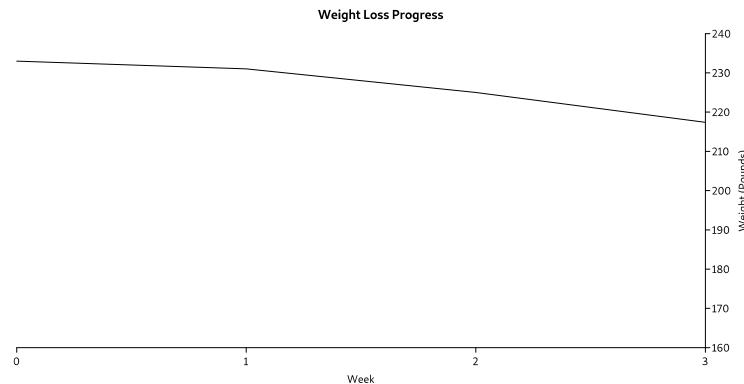
In week 3 I lost 7.6 pounds, which brought my total of 15.6 pounds lost so far. I can't account for that amount of weight loss in terms of BMR and calorie intake because there's no way I had a 26,600 calorie deficit over the week (a pound is 3500 calories or so). Anyway I was very happy with the weight loss progress, and still harboured hopes that I could reach my target weight before 90 days and then quit the diet, or maybe move on to Phase Three. Penn Jillette was saying that everyone hits a natural plateau at a few weeks in, so I prepared for that but still doubted I would encounter it because I was exercising.

Typically I ate a new dinner every week, so I had several days to modify, improve, and refine a recipe. The recipes provided here are starting points for you to improve upon. Focus on flavour, texture, and portion size and ask yourself if there's anything you would change. When you're done Phase Two you'll have a bunch of recipes you can keep. Write down your recipes in a journal.

The recipes provided later on in this book are meals for one, usually made in large batches and reheated over a week period. If you're cooking for people who aren't in the cult, you can add meat on the side. You might want to push this diet on loved ones, but ultimately that could be a bad idea because they'll go through the grouchy phase and resent the person who got them into it. Likewise if someone wants off this

crazy ride, let them. Remember, it's really not for everyone.

My weight loss progress so far was a real source of happiness. Actual results.





Week Four: Eating Away From Home

At the start of the week I made my first all-vegetable dinner recipe: a big batch of Puerto Rican Beans, and had it for dinner every day. I measured out 2 cups into a bowl to make sure I wasn't eating too much. For the dinners where I was at home I steamed some celery chunks and frozen peas, and had "dessert" of cucumber slices in white vinegar like my Mom used to make.

I was away from home visiting The Steele's for three days which is a difficult thing when on this diet. It wasn't all that well received by Sheila when I told her I'd be bringing my own food. When she made Chicken Divan for dinner it smelled truly amazing, but I warmed up the beans in the microwave and they tasted good. Also I couldn't eat at the same time as my hosts because of the fed window. Ugh. I felt like a bad guest because I was a bad guest.

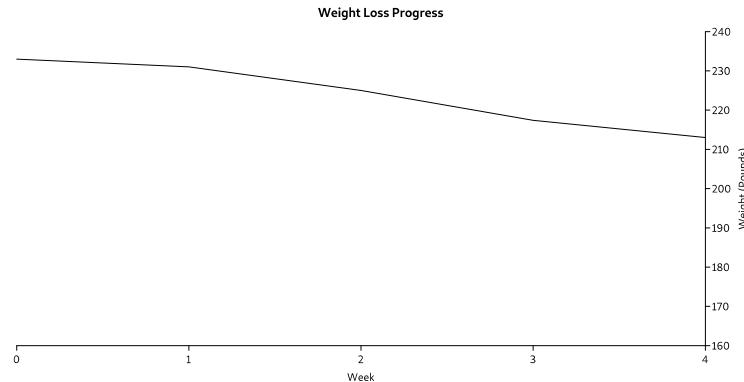
They live in the country which means they're on well water, and although it makes for better tasting water let me tell you it makes for colder frigging showers. Wow. I was back to gasping for air in the contrast shower. Just because you're not at home doesn't mean you don't have to follow the rules of the cult.

We stopped at McDonalds to eat one day and I ate two garden salads. No dressing - I was prepared for the situation having brought 2 tiny bottles of vinegar and Tobasco. Penn Jillette carries Tobasco with him wherever he goes, but I'm not that bad yet. A McDonalds worker did a double take at the bottles, I think because they kinda look like tiny liquor bottles. As I carefully picked off the cheese from the salad, John became exasperated saying "A little cheese isn't going to kill you." I tried to explain why it was important - that I didn't want to wake my stomach back up. I mean who wants to watch someone pick at their food, right? And what can I say? I'm on a crazy cult diet. Penn Jillette's approach is to not tell anyone about the diet for any reason. And if there's nothing suitable to eat to not eat at all. By inadvertently advertising food choices it can challenge others - it can set them off. I've been lucky with these situations (thank goodness) but your mileage may vary.

On the last day of the week I started eating a new salad (Salad #2). It primarily contained zucchini sliced with a mandolin slicer, but also had french beans, sugar snap peas, cherry tomatoes, sprouts, green onion, radish (mandolin sliced), button mushroom, broccoli, corn niblets and baby carrots. Vinegar and Mild Tobasco on top (I hadn't yet graduated on to the regular stuff). Not really a fan of the raw broccoli and it felt like a chore eating it. Also, I didn't like how the cherry tomato goes with the vinegar. I was smitten with the mandolin slicer because it helped me better appreciate texture in food. Somehow I had struck upon these lettuceless salads before I started the diet, and I thought of them as "all- killer, no-filler" salads.

I didn't meet my walking targets this week because I was away from home, and it couldn't be scheduled in. Well, maybe it could have but I was happy for the break. The walking wasn't technically part of the cult - it was just my sneaky idea to try and lose weight quicker. It's strange that I diverged from the cult in this way, because I followed it so well in almost every other way.

By the end of the week I lost 4.4 pounds which brought me down to 20 pounds lost over 4 weeks. That's good right? 20 pounds in 28 days! I certainly thought so.





Week Five: Listen To Your Body

I still had lots of Puerto Rican Beans to eat, and I noticed that my stomach had begun to make noises again. They weren't the loud kind of noises like before but I was worried that they were the harbingers of the old loud ones coming back (with the associated cravings.) At the time I blamed the beans and had some anxiety about it, but these noises were what I now know to be the "20 feet away in a box" kind of stomach noise that I have grown to appreciate.

Another source of anxiety were the dizzy spells I had been suffering, and they were always happening when I got up too fast. Cray Ray reports that many people on the diet have this symptom and that we should take sugar pills to alleviate them , like what a diabetic might take. I didn't. I just suffered through them and was anxious about passing out entirely. A few times my knees actually became wobbly and my vision would start to go black. It's scary, really. To deal with it I would get up in stages, sometimes taking up to a minute to go from lying down to standing. The worst was getting up from a hot bath to stand for the contrast shower. Yeesh. Many weeks later, I talked to the doctor about it and he thought it was pretty normal, but when I relayed how close I was to passing out he was more concerned and admitted he didn't

really know what it was, if it wasn't the common thing. The contenders are: postural hypotension (temporary low blood pressure to the brain) and low blood sugar. The former is more common than the latter. Cray Ray treats it as a low blood sugar thing, but my doctor was having none of that because I wasn't diabetic. I probably could have told the doctor just how low-sugar my diet was.

This diet is an adventure of trying new foods, and I tried a new food this week: Nutritional Yeast. Boy was I skeptical. It looks like sawdust and has one of the worst names in all of food. I put a tablespoon of it in some Puerto Rican Beans and it just disappeared. Maybe it made it a little heartier, but it was difficult to detect. The nutritional facts for it is entertaining. 919% Thiamine? Come on.

By mid-week I only had a little of the Puerto Rican beans left so I cooked up some brown rice to have with it. Another cheat. That's one of the joys of this diet, you can cheat with otherwise healthy food and it tastes so great. I justified it by looking at Penn's diet on *Calorielab* where claims he ate rice and beans a lot in Phase Two. I tried to stick to the rules and have just vegetables in legumes, and at this point I was worried that rice was going to become a weekly thing. For dessert I had sliced miniature cucumber in vinegar quite regularly, 4 days out of 7.

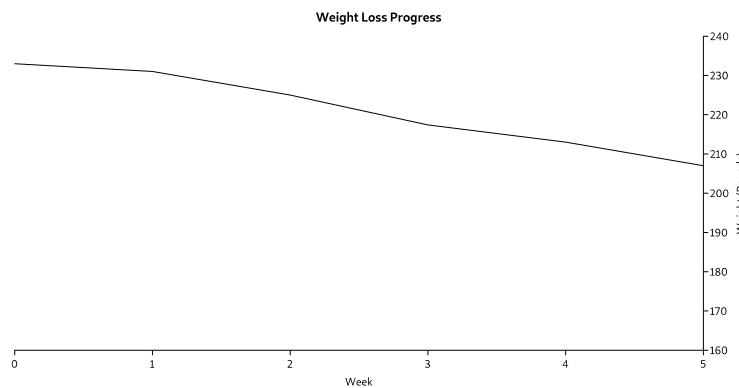
My next dish was Cauliflower and Chickpea Curry (Dinner #3), and I had it for dinner for the final 3 days of the week. Before this diet you couldn't have paid me to eat this, and now I was cooking it in trepidation with a curious anticipation. Was I going to magically like cauliflower now? I can't say I loved it, but it was good. It got better as I reheated it during the week because the cauliflower needed a little more cooking.

I spent a lot of time calculating meal calories against my BMR and walking regime, watching *All You Can Vegas* videos, and searching for whole food plant-based recipes. The *Nutrition Facts* website was a big help in finding out how many calories one

cucumber has, etc. I really wanted to make sure I had a serious calorie deficit going on. Meanwhile, I wasn't even hungry. Not like I used to be, anyway. I was sold on the diet, and the benefits were piling up. I was in it to win it. I even met my walking goals.

At one point during this week I realized I was sleeping better. I used to have acid reflux after eating a whole chocolate cake and a bowl of ice cream and then I'd really pay for it with lost sleep. Ridiculous. And I felt like I had no option! Hah! Back then I wanted to feel good and junk food was the answer. Even though I was having dizzy spells and I was tired from the walking, I felt as good as a chocolate high every day. I think my body was happy to be losing weight, or maybe it was the contrast showers, or maybe it was the nutrition, or all of the above. I was certainly no longer a grouch.

By the end of the week I lost 6 pounds, which brought me down to 26 pounds lost over 5 weeks.





Week Six: Getting Into The Groove

The diet was feeling like a full-time job. It required a lot of meal preparation time, thought, and research effort because there's so much to learn and I was going up the learning curve. I'd been trying to make it easier by making big batches of food, but the batches weren't big enough. And then I wanted more variety so I would lament a big batch of the same old food. This feeling goes away as you learn more recipes, watch more whole food plant-based videos and listen to more audio books but I was feeling rough about it at this point.

I started a new salad this week (Salad #3) that I ate 6 out of 7 days, consisting of baby spinach, a few slices of canned beet, green beans, half a mandolin sliced radish, mushrooms, a green onion, corn niblets, 1 baby carrot, 4 grape tomatoes and half a red pepper. Count out the vegetables if you want to be in control of your calorie intake, and at this phase it's important. Anyway, this was a particularly good-looking salad. You can imagine a bed of spinach, with a pile of veggies in the middle, and 4 rings of pepper arranged into a square. Inside each pepper ring is some mushroom, some beet and so on. And it's impossible to not like baby spinach - if anybody says they don't like it they're lying. On top of the salad was mild Tobasco, balsamic vinegar

and pepper. Served on a square plate. Yum.

The other lunch this week was Mushroom Mutter Masala (Lunch #1). I wanted a hot dish for lunch because a cold salad seemed too plain. It was too spicy though. I had it with some brown rice and again worried that the rice was becoming a weekly thing.

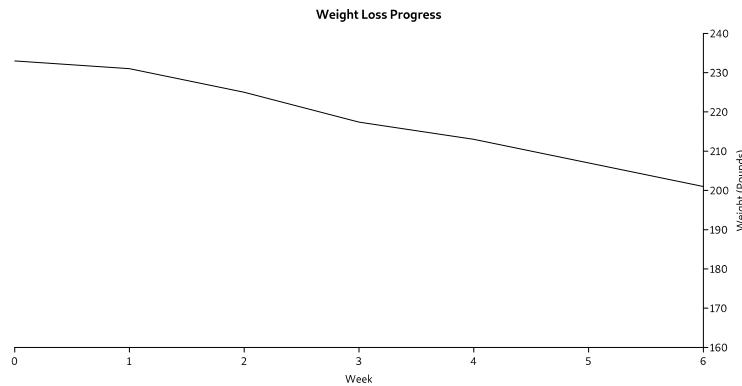
After the curry was gone I made new dinner dish: Mushroom and Bell Pepper Baked Beans (Dinner #4). It was a surprising amount of effort to find canellini beans, and the dish turned out great. I needed to buy a lot of different spices for this though - more spices than I have ever bought at one time in my life. The spice section is easily the most important section of the grocery store. It sounds dumb to say, but spices are how we provide variety to our vegetables and legumes, and variety is very important.

For my after-dinner dessert I again had miniature cucumbers in vinegar but on the last day of the week I discovered the new best thing ever: Tobasco on popcorn. Wow. Get yourself a popcorn maker and put some Tobasco on that shit. I used a quarter cup of kernels which fills a large bowl with popped corn. It felt like I was cheating on the diet but I wasn't. It was a real joy to mimic eating a junk food. Totally allowed! But watch the calories, we're in a calorie-counting phase here. As I chowed down on popcorn I said: "I can get used to this." Cut to comedian Brian Regan doing his rat-boy impression.

I found Lacroix canned beverages which contain primarily carbonated water and flavour. They were a joy because it helped me think I was eating junk food. I fooled myself into thinking they were whole food plant-based because youtubers recommended it. They aren't, at best they contain juice of a fruit, but they also contain crazy chemicals - at the very least BPA on the inside of the can. The key thing about Lacroix is that it's not addictive like all the other soft drinks. It is overwhelmingly just carbonated water. I enjoyed chugging the stuff while eating

popcorn! Glug-glug.

I met my walking goals, and the contrast showers were easy except for the ongoing dizzy spells. The fed-window was fine and I wasn't even hungry outside of it. By the end of the week I lost 6 pounds, which brought me down to 32 pounds lost over 6 weeks. I lowered my target weight to 185 pounds because things were going so well, and also part of me wanted to me off this diet, or this phase of the diet (I didn't know which.) My goal was just 16 pounds away, which was only 3 short weeks away at this rate. Exciting.





Week Seven: Totally Cheated

I was doing so well that I thought I'd try to screw it up by having an A&W Beyond Burger. I told myself it was a reward for breaking the 200 pound mark. I had been entertaining the idea for a while of a non-meat, non-sugary totally-cheating reward. Sure it was a bad idea but I wanted a break.

This diet says the Beyond Burger is disallowed in the following ways:

1. It is cooked on a grill where meat is cooked so it has some real beef grease on it.
2. It has mayonnaise (eggs), and ketchup (sugar).
3. The soy-based faux-meat patty is not whole food, and it has a lot of salt.
4. The cheese slice is dairy.
5. Any kind of bread is bad no matter what, and especially because it is a wheat-based bread.

I ordered the burger and asked for it to be plain without mayonnaise or cheese. The girl behind the cash nodded and said it was their most popular burger. In a few weeks all of the A&Ws ran out of Beyond Burgers. I got to my table and proceeded to find cheese and mayonnaise on the burger.

I mitigated the mayonnaise by buying some vegan mayo (more chemicals!) and mixing some regular mustard (a-ok) in it. I cleaned off the mayo/ketchup and replaced it with the stuff I made. Getting rid of all the cheese was a pain. There I was again, picking cheese off of my food in public. Sigh. Days later I found out that a lettuce bun was an option.

Needless to say, that burger tasted great. I told lots of people how great it was, and that it was surprisingly close to a real burger. To me it tasted like a normal burger, but a low-end kind that you would get at a fast-food place.

My confidence in the diet was overflowing as I met my walking goals for the week, and even when I cheated on the diet I met my calorie intake goals. I was losing weight hand over fist as seen by my progress over the last two weeks. I was walking tall!

For the other lunches I had the same salad as last week (Salad #3.) I was still watching the clock for it to hit noon so I could begin eating the salad. Honouring the fed-window is definitely a big part of this diet.

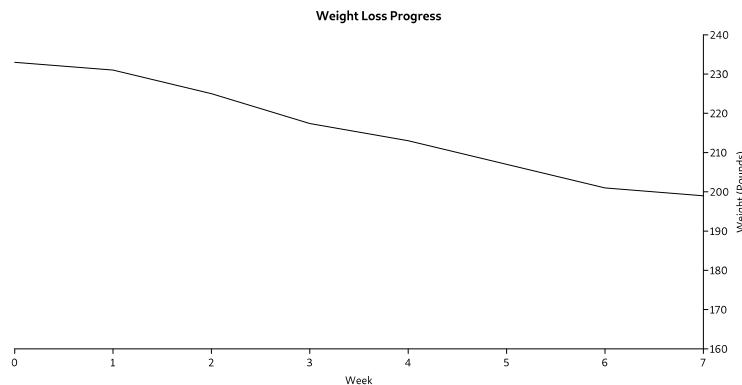
For one dinner I had the remainder of the baked beans, plus some brown rice and steamed veggies, but for the rest of the week I had Hot and Sour Soup (Dinner #5). I sound like a broken record, but this was my favourite meal so far – in hindsight I think this is probably because it had too much salt in it. When I begin to eat a food really fast, it's a sign that I'm breaking a rule, and boy I was eating this soup fast. I just loved the taste and the textures. Yum. In particular I liked the shiitake mushrooms and the taste of the fancy vinegar with the white pepper. I ate it with a Chinese-style spoon which enhances the taste somehow.

After most of the dinners I had $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of popcorn but I upgraded from the mild green

Tobasco to the habanero kind which seemed very hot to me and still does.

The little spice bottles were piling up from all the new recipes so I bought a spice rack to help handle the chaos in my cupboards.

By the end of the week I only lost 2 pounds, which brought me down to 34 pounds lost overall. I was disappointed and mostly decided that I was on the plateau that Penn warned about. I was hopeful that it was just a fluke weigh-in where I happened to be carrying more water, but in hindsight it wasn't. It really sucks to expend so much effort and fail in getting the desired results, but at the same time I knew it wasn't all that difficult. For the lack of weight loss I blamed the plateau, and secretly suspected the soup and the bread from the Beyond Burger.





Week Eight: Stuffed Peppers

The dinners for this week were 4 halves of stuffed peppers (Dinner #6). I know I said that the soup was my favourite thing ever, but now these stuffed peppers were because they were just so substantial. It was a lot of food and I felt more full because of it. Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids (the worst name in food along with Nutritional Yeast) on top was very tasty indeed. I measured it out with a eye-dropper to control the salt, 5 drops per half pepper. This is my go-to feel-good meal. I also had regular Tobasco on top.

Is Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids a whole food? No. But it is plant-based and the some Nutritarians on Youtube swear by it (like the Lacroix soda.) I justified eating it by saying that Phase Three of this diet was essentially Nutritarian. And with the dropper I was in control of it. Tobasco is also not a whole food, but it is vinegar-based so it gets a pass. Bragg's is soy-based. They both have some sodium.

I rinsed and soaked the kidney beans the night before and slow-cooked the kidney beans for several hours (Slow-Cooked Kidney Beans). It is a good habit to make some beans and then freeze them in sandwich bags with a little of the water they cooked in.

Yes, the beans will cause you to fart even if you rinse them properly. Get used to it. On this diet you will fart more. If you happen to know a fellow cult member and they fart, just let it be.

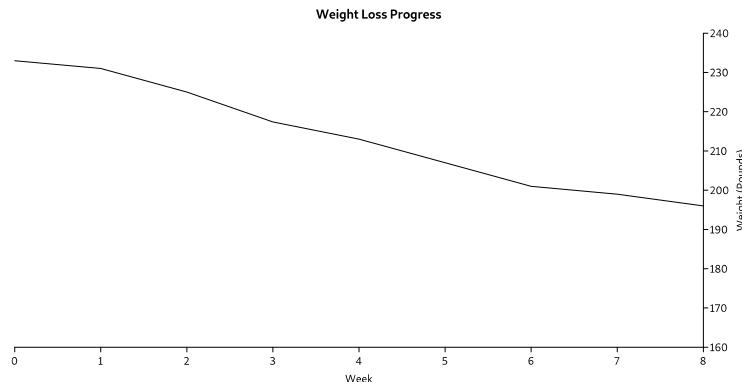
I still had popcorn after almost every dinner, sometimes with a Lacroix. Was it becoming a problem? Maybe. It's extra calories but I was still certain I was in a daily caloric deficit which is a necessity in this phase.

I tried a new lunch salad called a Herb Salad (Salad #4) and it was horrendous failure because the herbs were just far too powerful – way too much parsley and mint. They can't all be winners and this was one crappy salad! There was some basil which was alright, but the mint is what made it particularly inedible. Wow – it was just too much for my tastebuds. Over the week it morphed into something I could eat though and Salad #4b was born out of sheer necessity, which was the same salad but without the bad parts. I kept the dressing which was based on sherry vinegar and Dijon mustard. I used little ketchup squirt bottles for the dressing which was fun. Salad #4b was pretty good. The miniature cucumber slices pre-soaked in plum-blended vinegar were very tasty.

I was really in the groove meeting my walking goals. When starting a long walk, I decided to try and walk a little slower because I was felt tired, but by the end I'd be feeling energetic again. One morning was too rainy so I did it on the exercise bike instead.

The contrast showers were as easy as ever. At the end of the shower I would leave the water on cold to see how long I could go, and I could do it indefinitely. It became a bore! Hah. By this time, the hot water was more trouble than the cold. Were the showers actually doing anything? I don't know!

By the end of the week I lost 3 pounds which brought me to 37 total pounds lost. I was becoming resigned to only losing a few pounds a week now. It's the plateau. I made a new hole in my belt this week, and this was the fifth one. Diet aficionados say you need many measures of progress on a diet (rather than just the scales), and this is an easy one to do.



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Week Nine: Breaking The Routine

I felt so great that I decided to raise the exercise and lower the caloric intake to get faster results. To break the routine I started off by doing a workout on the exercise bike rather than the usual walk. The bike takes me just as long to burn the same amount of calories as walking with breaks and a bath afterwards. I did a combination of walking and bike for the week, but I also did an extra long walk of 25km to Britannia Beach. My daily routine was broken and I exceeded my exercise goals. The contrast showers went quickly. Tip: use an online walking calculator to see how many calories you burn on your daily walk if you're doing that. As your weight lowers, continue to be aware of your BMR and what your exercise adds to it.

Lunch for the whole week was Salad #4b. I love that salad.

My eating routine was relying on popcorn after dinner and it was becoming a problem, so I decided to not have any popcorn at all this week. I promised myself I'd have some at the start of next week as a reward. I did it too, I kept the promise.

Dinner for the whole week was Soothing Sweet Potato and Beet soup (Dinner #8).

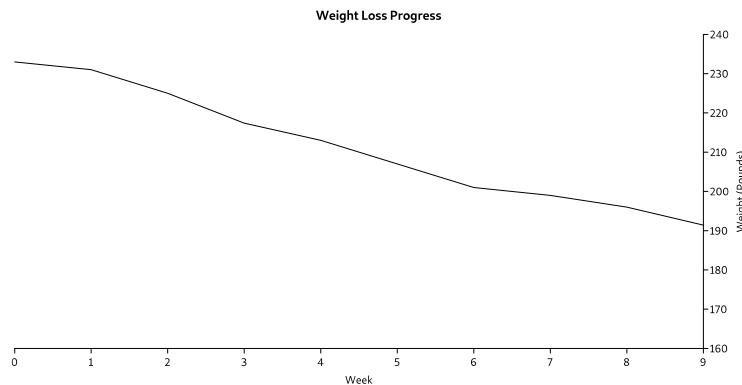
Each bowl was measured out to be exactly 2 cups. I enjoyed putting in very hearty amounts of arugula and baby spinach into the soup base and watching it cook down. Putting leafy greens in a soup was a first for me and I really enjoyed it. With this recipe I learned the importance of having a soup base and then adding things to it. The leafy greens taste better if they're only cooked once.

It's fun learning new ways to cook. Incidentally this is something Penn Jillette didn't do because his wife cooks all his meals at home. Such frequent cooking is an essential part of my journey so far. This diet is generally more difficult because of the extra work in the kitchen, and Penn had that burden lifted. I have no idea why Oprah doesn't have a live-in cook and just do this diet. Anyway. I know it's not for everyone, and that's okay too. Even with the extra food preparation time it's still the easiest diet I've ever done because of the lack of cravings and how good I feel. In my journal I left a note about how zealous I was feeling about the diet. I wanted to tell people all about it! And I did, which was probably a mistake because people don't like to be challenged on their food choices, even if they bring it up. After so many weeks of feeling great it was easy to tell people about it. People have to know what they're missing! I couldn't believe it. I was feeling far far better than I expected, and because I felt so good, the diet was very easy to stay on.

After doing some research on vitamins it became clear that I had to take vitamin B-12 because it's a necessary vitamin for vegans. If you don't have any B-12 your body can't make blood cells (yikes.) You start out with a healthy store of it, but when it runs out you start getting crazy diseases. The new routine of daily vitamins began. A few weeks later I added an Omega-3 fish oil capsule and a multivitamin just to cover all the bases. I guess the fish oil capsules aren't vegan but that's okay because I'm not actually vegan. The Omega-3 is for better brain function and in hindsight I'd swear on a stack of bibles that it helps. There's no real logic to the multivitamin except I wanted one that had Vitamin K-2 that is only available in meat. Is it really the ideal diet

for humanity if it requires taking pills? Nope. It's not. But I love it regardless and recommend it to people who I think might be similar to me. I want to spread and share the happiness it has brought me.

I weighed-in at 191.4 pounds which was 4.6 pounds lost during the week, and 41.6 pounds lost overall. I didn't get the weight loss I expected and it felt like I did a lot more work this week. Was I still in the plateau? Was the soup too high in calories? In hindsight I probably should have kept with the same exercise routine because I felt the wheels were starting to come off.



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Week Ten: More Potatoes

First off, I had popcorn with a can of lime Lacroix on day one as a reward for all that hard work last week and it was wonderful.

Secondly, potatoes weren't my favourite thing since the initial two weeks of this diet but I decided to give Herbed Mashed Potatoes (Dinner #10) a try. The main thing here were the herbs: I had never even heard of majoram before. I mashed them up with a little Mushroom Ketchup (not Ketchup at all, it's more like spiced vegetable stock) that I found on a pioneerish Youtube channel called Townsends. I had steamed vegetables with the potatoes, like celery chunks and peas and broccoli. I enjoyed the potatoes, but less so by the end of the week (and I always enjoy steamed veggies, maybe because of the spicy accent that Tobasco gives them.)

A random lady on Youtube said that it's best to peel and cut up your potatoes at the start of the week and refrigerate them into water, so that's what I did. I don't think it saves time and they were definitely kind of slimy and smelly by the end of the week. And being in water lets the vitamins leach out which is bad from a nutrition perspective. So don't do that! Peel your potatoes when you need them. Also,

mashing with the skin is important to retain nutrients.

I had good old Salad #4b every day for lunch except for one. I guess I'm a creature of habit because I really don't mind eating the same thing every day. If I was sick of this salad I would move on to a new one, but nope - there is enough variety in this salad to keep me interested for weeks. It helps that I put a little Mushroom Ketchup on it, because it changes up the taste. However, I was starting to look for a new salad, mostly out of embarrassment at eating the same thing for so long.

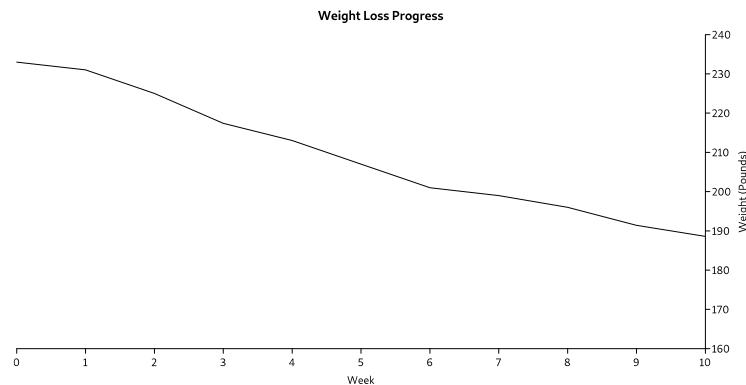
On Saturday I had a Fiazza vegan pizza for dinner. Fiazza is just the name of a local pizzeria that has a vegan option. I was trying to see what conveniences I could depend on. This was a small oven-fired vegan pizza with Daiya cheese (soy based faux-cheese), and gluten-free crust. \$24 is a lot to spend on such a small pizza even if it was totally delicious and loaded with veggies and tofu. It was another cheat, and much worse than the Beyond Burger in terms of calories.

On Sunday I had two Subway salads for lunch. I brought them home and combined them into a big bowl and threw some white vinegar, Tobasco and ground pepper on top. The pickles were too salty and had way too much flavour. I wanted to see if I could make life easier by sometimes buying salads at Subway, and although I can it is remarkably expensive and not all that fresh. One salad is too little, two salads is too much.

The wheels sort of fell off on the walking. I didn't walk at all for three days due to lack of willpower, and then I tried to make up for it with extra walking and didn't quite meet my goal. I was 10 km short by the end of the week and totally pooped.

I weighed in at 188.6, which was down 2.8 pounds over the week, and 44.4 pounds down overall. I was disappointed, but I was heartened enough to lower my target

weight down to 180 from 185, which is technically still overweight according to the BMI. I couldn't help but be pleased overall though. I was at an average of 0.63 pounds lost per day. Not bad right?



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Week Eleven: Super Chili & Romaine lettuce

This week I had Super Chili for dinner (Dinner #11.) I got it from Jill's whole food plant-based Youtube channel, which I love. The Super Chili is one of Jill's Meatless Mondays recipes, and I modified it to not have goji berries (a super food) which makes the chili less super. It's really impossible not to enjoy. I overcooked it though and burned the bottom of my dutch oven. Adding red cabbage became a fun thing for the extra crunch.

I finally changed up the salad, and it doesn't have a name other than Salad #5. It contained romaine lettuce, 1 pearl onion, 5 whole pea pods, 5 grape tomatoes, 2 rings of yellow pepper, pea sprouts, a miniature cucumber, a brown mushroom and corn niblets. It's a conventional salad, but perhaps a little bigger. Tobasco on a salad is still unconventional though.

I always had a food taboo against romaine lettuce for some childish reason - I think it's associated with my dislike of cesar salad. (I'm sure it tastes fine and I've eaten it before but grudgingly. Food taboos don't make sense.) So this was the first time I'd purchased romaine lettuce at the grocery store in my whole life. And it was great of

course, but kinda plain by itself obviously.

This new salad was dressed with vinegar, Tobasco, and ground pepper and sometimes a little nutritional yeast on top (because it was still weird to me.) Looking back, this salad has the characteristics of a good Phase Three salad: mostly leafy greens and a lot of them.

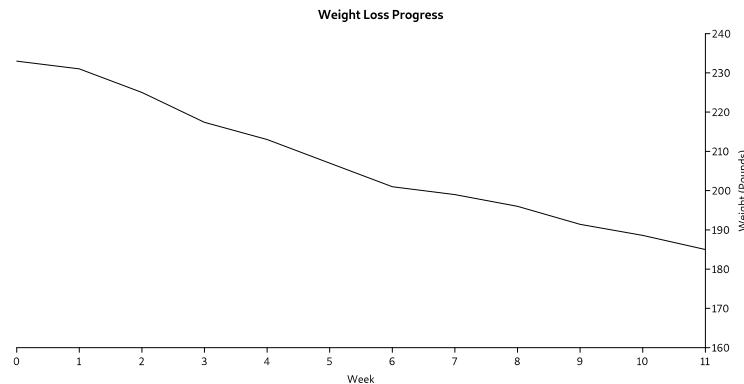
It's still important to look up the calorie counts and add them all up, because if you don't have a caloric deficit every week on this diet (or any diet) then what's the point? I wasn't throwing stuff on a salad willy-nilly. Who said I should have 5 grape tomatoes? Nobody except me! Make your own salad, and add as much or as little variety as you like. Try some new vegetables already.

I met my walking goals for the week. My right shoulder was acting up, because of so many days of walking in a row. It's the repetitive stress of walking that builds up and by the end of a walk at this point I'd feel pain when I tried to raise my right arm above my head. It's just a limitation I have to deal with it by putting my right hand in my pocket when walking. I can't attach the phenomenon to any particular food or weather - it's 100% repetitive stress.

I really loved my long-lasting mp3 player for giving me podcasts as I walked. It was light and simple and I'd load it up with podcasts the night before or sometimes in the morning. It was the kind where I could replace the AAA battery when it ran out which made it easy (and light) to always have power. When I knew the battery was getting low, I just popped another battery into my pocket. It wasn't great for the environment but I swear it was a pinnacle of convenience. I love you red RCA TH1814.

At the end of the week I weighed 3.6 pounds less, which was 48 pounds overall. I was now resigned to losing less than 6 pounds a week now. Okay, hitting my target

weight seemed inevitable. I still felt great and was seeing improvements in my mood. By this point I was pretty certain that this diet was for me. I wasn't quite all in, but I was getting very close to that.



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Week Twelve: Eggplant Rollatini

I really wanted to do more baking and to have a special meal, so I made Eggplant Rollatini (Dinner #12.) It wasn't a whole food recipe because they contained plenty of Daiya cheese, which makes it a bit of a cheat.

It is a fun recipe to make. The trusty mandolin slicer let me down here because it's not wide enough for eggplant, so I carefully sliced the eggplant and then baked it to make it rollable. I made it with a bit of asparagus at the center of every roll, and perhaps I'd change that if I did it again. It's useful to have something cylindrical to roll it around.

I had large portions of this stuff, but at the end of the week I had lost my taste for eggplant. And it didn't reheat very well. Maybe I should try it again sometime with Swiss Chard as the rolling component.

Even with the large portions of rollatini I still had steamed vegetables on the side with Tobasco on top. It's not possible for me to get tired of steamed vegetables.

Salad #5 was my lunch for the week. I added pickled jalapenos to the salad. They didn't add the zing I was hoping for, just more salt. I suppose they're whole food but the salt content of any pickle is usually off the charts because it's a preservative.

I hit the spicy popcorn hard after dinner every night – sometimes 3 bowls of it. Sometimes I had popcorn after lunch too. I definitely had a full-blown popcorn problem. As a result, my daily caloric deficit was disappearing.

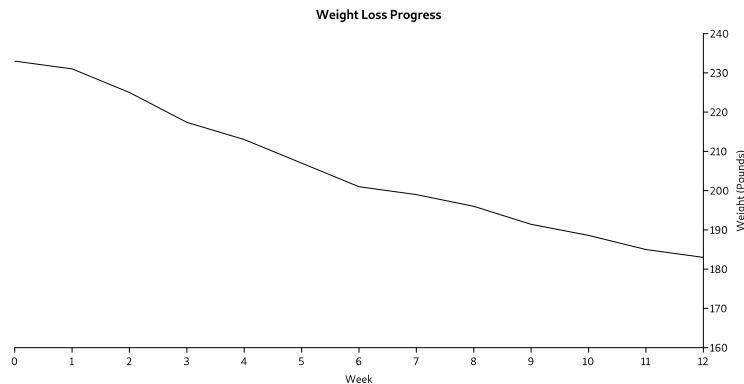
The walking goals were met with some difficulty because of my shoulder. But the weather was getting cooler and rainier which made the walks easier. There's something about walking with an umbrella that makes a walk more enjoyable.

It is counterproductive to your morale to weigh yourself daily if you're going to lose so few pounds over a week. I pushed my scales waaay under my sink to make it harder for me to weigh myself. There was an enthusiasm boost that came with checking my weight so I did it a lot in the prior weeks but now it's not always good news. It is best to weigh yourself once a week if you can manage that. My weight can fluctuate 4-5 pounds in a day very easily. Always do your weigh-ins at the same time of day.

I lost 2 pounds during this week which took me down to 50 pounds lost overall. Quite a milestone. I weighed 183 pounds which I hadn't been since the early 2000s. My goal was just 3 pounds away but I now I figured I'd do the whole ninety days of Phase Two, which was only three weeks away.

More than once on this diet I wished I had a set of timed lock boxes that can be set to open at particular times in the week. I guess that shows that I find it difficult to control my eating – but I would enjoy the gadgetry of it and I'd also like the feeling of getting a reward for waiting. Portion control is less of a problem on this diet though. I

mean I'd been pigging out on popcorn and having really huge meals but I was still losing weight because everything was a low-calorie food. The size of my meals really made me feel full, while the nutrients release energy slowly and made me feel good.



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Week Thirteen: Jamaican Jerk & Brussel Sprouts

This week I missed one day of walking and ended up 5.5 km short of my goal. It was nice taking a day off, and then I didn't have the gumption to make it up later in the week.

The wheels started to come off the contrast showers, and I did it 6 days out of 7. I guess I wanted a break from the diet – a more normal lifestyle. At this point I felt that the showers were an inconvenience. I was paranoid that the showers were somehow more integral than I realized and the diet would fall apart – how I was feeling was valuable to me and I didn't want to lose it. Anyway, I didn't notice any difference after omitting the contrast shower for a single day, so maybe the effect is either cumulative or non-existent. My mood was certainly improved since I started the diet but how much of that was due to contrast showers? I still have no idea.

Lunch for the week was Jamaican Jerk Salad (Salad #6), a fun salad where half of it sauteed in a pan, and the other half is fresh greens. It was kinda fun to load the vegetables into a big Ziploc bag and mix it with the balsamic vinegar and jerk spices and shake it around – a more physical style of cooking I guess. At the time I thought of

it as a lot of work but nowadays I put even more work into my daily lunch salad than this.

This salad got me into layered salads, and also into cooked hot or warm salads. I would go on in later weeks to have some sauteing involved with my daily lunch salads -- maybe because the weather is cooler and I appreciate hot food more.

My popcorn addiction was 9 bowls over the week, but only on four of seven days. Over the previous week I had 15 bowls, so this was an improvement. One good reason to keep a journal of what you eat is so that you can see your progress in things like this. And be honest.

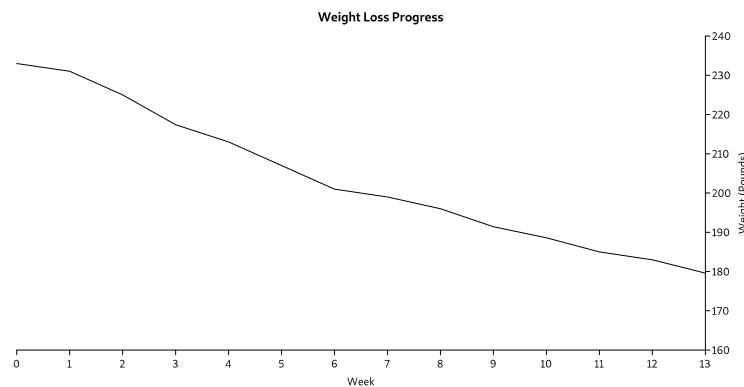
Dinner was a big old batch of soup made in my dutch oven: Tomato Carrot Brussel Sprout Soup (Dinner #13.) I had two cups of it every night, and then also some steamed vegetables on the side. I made the mistake of putting the brussel sprouts in the soup at the start of the week instead of adding them in every day (like I did with the arugula) as I reheated the base. It made for a stinkier soup by the end of the week which was a little gross. So if you make this recipe, learn from my mistake.

Brussel sprouts are one of the foods my Mom made me eat that I had decided I disliked beforehand probably because of their portrayal in popular media. And to be fair, I really didn't like the taste when I finally tried it (I tried exactly one), however maybe their reputation spoiled them. Fast-forward many years and I'm voluntarily putting brussel sprouts in my soups for taste. Yes it's true, as if by magic, I like brussel sprouts now.

I had steamed vegetables on the side with this dinner, and I dumped the Tobasco hot sauce on the veggies, as well as the soup. It was a real sinus-clearing experience. Thank goodness for Tobasco, and it never gets old (and if it does, I'm in trouble.)

I made the soup non-whole-food by putting Daiya cheese on top. And I added some salt to it by putting some pickled jalapenos on top. So this soup was cheating in two ways. That's the thing about this diet – cheat meals become somewhat healthy vegan food. I had this dinner seven days in a row and loved it. But just to be extra clear, every time I ate Daiya cheese I was breaking the rules of this diet. I had a bag of the stuff left over from the Rollatini and wanted to use it up.

I lost 3.4 pounds over the week taking me to 53.4 pounds lost overall. And now there were only two more weeks to go until Phase Three. The end was in sight. And I was under 180 pounds! Woooo!



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Week Fourteen: Daikon & Herbs de Provence

In celebration of going sub-180 pounds I went to the A&W for another Beyond Burger but they were all sold out, and it wasn't just my local A&W, the phenomenon was actually nationwide. I settled for a Subway salad, brought it home and added some mushrooms to it and plied it with vinegar, Tobasco, ground pepper and nutritional yeast. Buying subway salads saves a lot of time especially compared to last week's salad.

This week's salad takes just as much time to make and it's officially my all-time favourite salad. No doubt about it. It is the Toasted Chickpea & Yam Salad (Salad #7). The chickpeas are baked and the sweet potato chunks are water-sautéed along with some onion and celery. Maybe it's the garlic that makes the salad, or the chili powder., or the fact that the sautéed vegetables bring a real warmth to it.

It's a three layer salad:

1. Greens and other raw veggies on the bottom layer.
2. raw mushroom and toasted chickpeas.
3. sautéed veggies.

Before the mushrooms go on, the greens get the vinegar and Tobasco treatment along with nutritional yeast and ground pepper.

Yum. Sometimes I let the finished salad sit for a minute so the heat of the sauteed vegetables works its way down. It's a wonderful salad that takes a long time to make but it's so great that I don't mind. I wonder about the chemicals on the parchment paper that the chickpeas bake on though. Hmm. I should probably get off my ass and gain some vegan credibility by making the chickpeas from dried beans rather than buying them in cans. But if you are buying them in cans, watch out for the ones where they add all kinds of salt. Also, this salad is suitable for Phase Three because of the large amount of leafy greens.

I stopped the contrast showers this week, and I don't really know why. They're a little uncomfortable even when you're used to them. It's just so difficult to tie any particular benefit to doing them. They were certainly redundant from a cleaning perspective. The practice is part of the cult though, and I did more than two months of it. I mailed Penn Jillette's podcast to see if he still does contrast showers in Phase Three and there was no answer. Not doing them meant I could get out the door 5 minutes earlier which I appreciated.

I met my walking goals for the week without much difficulty, except for the ongoing shoulder problem. Maybe it's related to walking posture rather than repetitive stress. Ugh. At any rate, 65 km were traversed by foot. Again. With the end in sight now I knew I wouldn't be doing the daily walks for much longer, which made it easier.

Dinner this week was fairly extravagant: Roasted Beet Casserole (Dinner #14.) It was a rice dish, so it was fairly heavy on grains and carbs.

I needed to buy a Daikon radish for this recipe and I had no idea what it even looked

like. Google images went showed me, and then I went to the store to find one. There weren't any labels that said Daikon Radish, but I found what looked like one and asked a worker if it was in fact a Daikon radish and he said yes. It was a bit of a food geek moment. "I thought so!" I said, with a smile that was probably way too big.

I had a real desire for baked casseroles because they seem special somehow. Well I did up this casserole and baked it and it was wonderful with the Herbs de Provence giving it the main flavour. The next flavour was the Daikon radish. I'm pretty sure I messed up the quantities because beets were pretty low on the flavour radar.

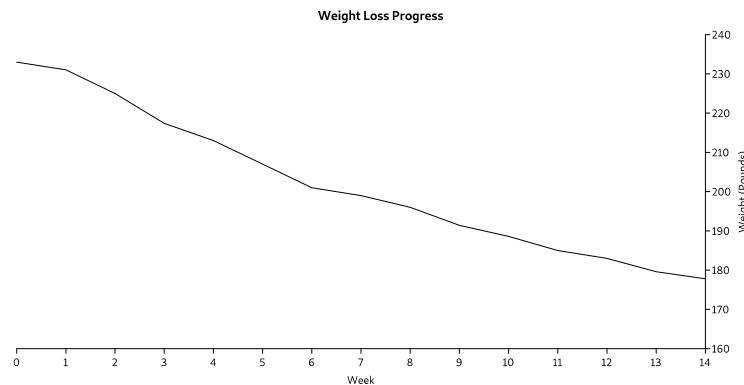
Every night at dinner I reheated the casserole 2 cups at a time in the oven, sometimes adding a little more Herbs de Provence on top. It wasn't exactly a quick process but it was easy and it tasted good. There is an old rule of thumb in cooking that when you reheat a food, you do it in the same way it was originally cooked. It maximizes flavour. Don't sell your recipes short by sticking them in the microwave!

Even though the casserole was A Lot Of Food ™, I still had the steamed vegetables with Tobasco on the side, and then of course popcorn afterwards. I noticed my dizzy spells had gotten better. Probably because of all that rice.

The popcorn situation went from 9 bowls last week to 11. Sadly there will always be an urge to eat more if it's tasty, even if I'm completely full on good food that supplies all the nutrients I need. But at least it's healthy. I was still losing weight even though these bowls of popcorn continued to eat into my caloric deficit.

On this week I lost a paltry 1.8 pounds, which took me down to 177.8 pounds and 55.2 pounds lost overall. One more week to go. This was the least amount of weight I had lost in any week on this diet, and I blame the rice-heavy casserole. Rice is a no-no on this phase of the diet, and I just had it for dinner every night of the week. Yeesh. I

know I would have lost even more if I had followed the rules of the cult a little more strictly. Of course I was very excited to have lost over 50 pounds now. It certainly affects the wardrobe -- I switched from extra large t-shirts to large.



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Week Fifteen: The Final Week of Phase Two

Phase Two was set to 90 days by Cray Ray because he says that's how long an average human being can last on a restricted calorie diet before breaking down and eating more food. I had cheated on the diet many times, but always managed to keep losing weight week over week by cheating with foods that were relatively low in calories. The diet kept me feeling full, and my cravings were still at an all-time low. It felt great – sure to be carrying around 50 fewer pounds, and there was some elation to have succeeded in some degree, but I also felt just way better on a day to day basis. It's a feeling that hasn't gone away, and I really want to remember just how big that change was for when I think eating shitty food is a good idea. In the early 2000s when I went off the Atkins diet I hit the shitty food hard, and the subsequent weight rebound was fast. I was definitely concerned of that happening here.

This week I stuck with the Toasted Chickpea and Yam salad (Salad #7.) It was as delicious as ever. I could eat it every day forever – as long as I can continue to chew, that is. What?

While eating the salad I noticed my right jaw was making a clicking sound, and it

developed into a more painful situation later on in the week. Was it a nutritional deficiency? What was happening? After going to the doctor, it turns out it's TMJ brought on by stress, or all the extra chewing I was doing, or both. It's a jaw muscle disorder. He said it would probably just go away on its own and if it didn't I should book another appointment. It stayed for about three weeks, and boy was I happy to see it go! Not fun. Ibuprofen worked best, but it didn't have much of an effect. Watch out for TMJ on this diet – and if you get it, my advice is to switch to soups.

Sadly, the walking goals were not met for the final week of Phase Two. I was exactly 5.5 km short because I didn't go walking on the last day. I like Bill Burr's take on weekly goals: if you don't meet your goal it's zero points for the week – there are no part marks. The most important kilometre is the last kilometre. Most weeks I got full marks which is a source of pride, and I set the goal to be difficult enough that I didn't always meet it.

While I was out walking I'd see overweight people running and sweating their asses off, and I wanted to shout "You don't have to struggle so hard!" because clearly they didn't know the joy of this diet. Hah. I have an unfortunately large amount of zeal but it's not enough to actually shout at strangers.

Regarding losing weight, there's no shortage of people saying: "All you have to do is expend more calories than you take in." which seems horrifyingly simplistic to anyone who has struggled to lose weight. A calorie is not a calorie is not a calorie, despite what Coca-Cola says to the contrary. How you feel *matters* because it affects your ability to stay in a calorie deficit. Some calories serve you better than others – and we call that nutrition. Maybe you can hear my condescension. Ugh.

The Cray Ray people would say that I would have lost more weight (or lost it quicker) had I not exercised at all. It's hard not to imagine that expending so many calories

over so many weeks didn't have a positive impact. Maybe the no-exercise thing is meant for the folks who need to lose 100 pounds. But I definitely diverged from the cult/diet when it came to the walking, and I'll leave it up to you to read the Cray Ray pitch for no exercise. There is a story or a rationale for the fed window, and the showers, and the no-exercise but to get the official low-down you'll probably have to sign up for the *Just Sides* diet. Perhaps I could have been convinced to not walk during Phase Two if I had read or heard some actual arguments.

Dinner for the week was a variation of a favourite dinner from earlier on: Stuffed Peppers, but this time with black beans instead of kidney beans (Dinner #15). I am hyper-concerned about getting the best flavours, so I looked up what the best spices were for black beans and my searches came back with just one answer. Dried epazote. If you want authentic Mexican tasting black beans, you had to use epazote. I purchased it weeks in advance, and I still have huge bags of the stuff because I didn't actually know what I was buying and a little goes a long way. They say it sorta tastes like cumin.

I slow-cooked a large batch of black beans and epazote, most of which went into the freezer. For dinner every night I'd thaw out some beans and add some more epazote and add other pepper stuffing foods like celery, onion, or mushroom. Then I'd stuff 4 pepper halves and bake 'em. There is some talent in estimating exactly how much stuffing to make.

Stuffed Peppers is still one of my favourite dinners. After they're out of the oven I put Bragg's Liquid Aminos on top with an eyedropper, as well as Tobasco which I just dump on. Yikes. And it's not even a lot of work to make. The hardest part is finding a halving point on the pepper where the two halves will sit flush, and then kinda carving out the seeds. And it's really not that difficult to do.

The popcorn situation was 11 bowls last week, and it stayed steady at 11 this week too, with a whopping 4 bowls of popcorn on the final night. Hah! I thought: "What's the worst that could happen?" One downside of all the popcorn eating was the pieces of kernels stuck in my teeth. I had one nagging piece that really irritated my gums for weeks, and when I got a dental cleaning I practically jumped out of the chair when the hygenist dug it out. Yowzers. But hey, the upside is delicious spicy popcorn! Nom, nom, nom.

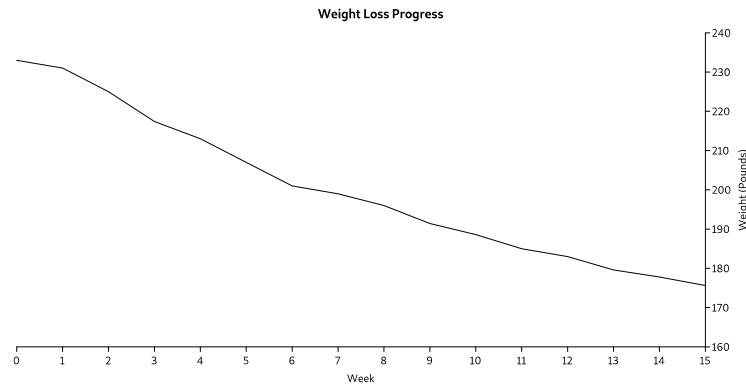
I lost 2.2 pounds over the week which took me down to 175.6 pounds and 57.4 pounds lost overall. I even made a new hole my belt on the last day of Phase Two, which is always a nice feeling.

I was a little anxious that I would continue to lose weight on Phase Three, because I was eating so well in Phase Two and I was still losing weight. The plan was to open the fed window to three meals a day, and stop exercising entirely, and switch to a diet that has more fruit, nuts, and grains and see what happens. I bought some Eat To Live cookbooks in advance because of the never-ending search for more recipes. I'm really not sure how many recipes I need but I'm still searching for new ones.

I completed 91 days of Phase Two and I think I could have done more. A few of the recipes were more suited to Phase Three, but I could have eaten stuffed peppers for at least another week. The salad is certainly good to go for an indefinite period of time on Phase Three.

I was eager to officially move on to the next phase of the diet and have breakfast, and watermelon, and cashews and even chocolate! Chocolate? Yep. You don't say! Just how awesome was Phase Three going to be anyway? I couldn't wait to chomp into an apple.

I ended up at 57.4 pounds lost in 104 days, which is a whole lot less than Penn Jillette's 105 pounds in 86 days. It was truly his feat that inspired me.



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Week Sixteen: Glorious Phase Three & Beyond

If you've been following along on the diet, congratulations on completing 104 days of eating nothing but vegetables! Or perhaps you got here early because you met your target weight! In either case, you can go back to trying to eat moderately in the Standard North American Diet, or you can graduate to Phase Three. Personally I find the changes in my gut to be too valuable to give up so easily. The journey into a whole food plant-based lifestyle can continue in Phase Three.

Phase Three means you can eat many more kinds of food other than just vegetables including:

- fruit
- grains
- seeds and nuts

I can't underestimate how enthusiastic I was for Phase Three. These three worlds of food were just waiting to be explored, and I felt like a lucky guy to be experiencing it this way. There was definitely some anxiety mixed in with the enthusiasm though, like: What if I got sick of vegetables, or went overboard on fruit?

On the 'no' list are:

- meat
- dairy
- oil
- added sugar or added salt
- breads

And it's still a whole food plant-based lifestyle which means:

- No processed food unless it uses the whole edible portion of the plant.
- Eat nothing that isn't plant-based.
- Take B-12 vitamins.

On Phase Three we get the majority of our calories from leafy green vegetables and this is saying a lot because they are not high in calories! Resign yourself to having a large salad for lunch – there's no way around this! How large? A pound and a half of leafy greens. If you can do that you're in the cult. I don't have a scale or anything but it's a big 'serving' bowl full, and not a regular-sized bowl.

There is a food pyramid in the Nutritarian world and I'll let you find that look it up on your own. But the main thing to know is that largest chunk of the pyramid is leafy greens, then starchy vegetables, then legumes, and then at the top of the pyramid you get the foods on the 'no' list – even meat, but they are in such small percentage calorically that they're in the once a month and in a very small amount category. Meat is high in nutrients (yay!), but very high in calories (boooo!). The Cray Ray folks are separate from the Nutritarian folks, but it has been decreed by the Cray Ray folks that the Nutritarian food pyramid is basically the right one. Yeah it's kinda hand-wavy and cultish, but so is every food pyramid and some are more healthy than others. Nutritarians strive for a high nutrient per calorie density in an essentially whole food plant-based diet.

Warning: There is a ‘healthy foods can prevent cancer’ vibe in the Nutritarian world which might be sort of true, and it might be sort of bullshit. There are even some (bullshit) testimonials like ‘I beat my cancer with the Nutritarian diet’, and so on. But hey, they got the food pyramid right (so says I.) Certainly do this diet for your health, but for God’s sake get to a hospital if you have symptoms.

There are many Nutritarian cookbooks and recipes site online under the moniker ‘Eat To Live’. Go look them up and buy one or two cookbooks if you feel inclined. It’s just easier to have a bunch of recipes on hand. I also find it fairly easy to use healthy vegan recipes and remove oil and salt. Also, Dr Furhman’s website (he’s the guy behind Nutritarianism and Eat To Live) has a lot of great food that you can order. It’s not cheap but I can say that it seems to be high quality stuff.

Penn Jillette added a Rare & Appropriate day, which are cheat days that he can have once every two weeks, except they aren’t cheat days because he’s planning for them in his diet. Just because it’s every two weeks doesn’t mean go out and eat junk food every two weeks – there has to be a point to it, like a special occasion. I have adopted the R&A as well, but haven’t used it – at least I haven’t used it to eat meat, ice-cream and so on. I had a Beyond Burger with a bun and I guess that’s R&A because of the bread. Keep a spreadsheet of your R&A meals to ensure two weeks have passed. Life is easier knowing that I can take a R&A day even though I don’t take advantage of it. But I may! I have a feeling that if I were to break down and have a doughnut that it would be disgustingly sweet.

Alright, back to week sixteen. The fed window was open, and I could have breakfast! The recommended breakfast on this diet is: oatmeal (Breakfast #1.) You can’t use quick oatmeal or the instant stuff, only the old fashioned rolled oats will do. As a child I didn’t like oatmeal very much, but I only had traditional oatmeal once or twice and

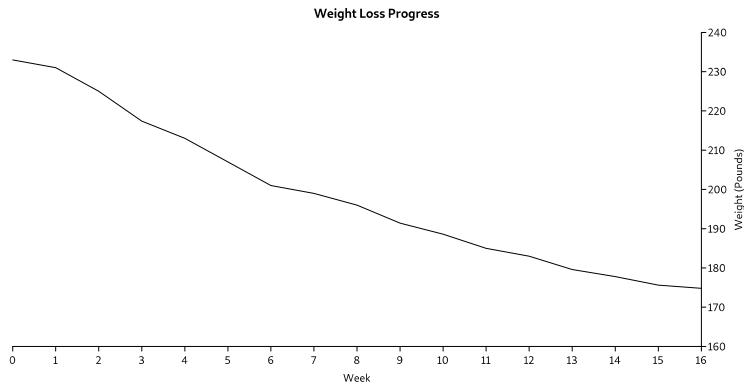
the fruit content was much lower, and the brown sugar content was much higher. It seemed bland. But this oatmeal recipe is different in that it is fairly heavy in fruit – it seems like half oatmeal and half fruit. I add some frozen berries, an apple and sometimes a banana too. The fruit provides the majority of sweetness, and then I also add cinnamon and pure vanilla extract (artificial extract is not allowed) to round it out. When I tasted it on that first day of Phase Three I wasn't exactly bowled over and laughing like I was with the corn on the first day of Phase Two. But then I thought: It's this sweet, and I can eat it every day? I'm in. I'm quite happy to have this bowl of oatmeal every morning. It's kind of expensive because of the pure vanilla extract, cinnamon and fruit but it's what the cult demands.

For lunch I continued with Salad #7. Two weeks later I changed to Salad #7b which is Salad #7 but has carrots instead of sweet potatoes and some cashew cheese on the mushroom slices – just a dab or less than a dab on each slice.

The popcorn situation for Week Sixteen was 9 bowls. Not bad. But I also had three squares of 85% cacao chocolate a day. Yum. 85% falls below the 90% minimum guideline, but it's what I could find. Nowadays 85% seems too sweet.

I kept the same dinner as last week too: Four halves of orange peppers stuffed with black beans, epazote, chopped celery, and mushroom.

I lost 0.8 pounds over the week and I didn't exercise at all! Wow. I was down 58.2 pounds total now, and I was somewhat certain that my weight was floating because I did the math with my BMR and my daily caloric intake. Subsequent weeks would bear this out going down to a maximum of 60.8 pounds lost, but then rising back up.



Currently my BMI is on the line between overweight and normal, right around 25. My doctor says that BMI is just a number and I'm okay with that line of thinking. I have not subscribed to the Nutritarian belief that a BMI over 23 is overweight, mostly because I don't want to think of myself as overweight. Yes it's mostly a mental thing, but I don't want to look skeletal either, and I know exactly how I would go about losing 15 pounds if I wanted to.

After week sixteen: My meals stayed the same for a long time but I changed the dinners every week. There were some stand-out recipes like Thanksgiving Lentil Loaf and Famous Asparagus & Pea Soup. And I had a dessert of Pumpkin Squares with Macadamia Frosting which was amazing because it was sweetened entirely with vanilla and medjool dates.

Some weeks I had rice every day which is a bad idea according the food pyramid. And I had some vegan sausage which is on the no list because it is processed food. I really fell in love with that asparagus and pea soup though, thus the "Famous" moniker.

Phase Three is like falling off a log, which is a good thing because it's a maintenance diet and it lasts forever! *Insert Vincent Price laugh here.* But the joke's on me because I actually like it. I don't have the cravings, I feel so much better than I used to, and I find it much easier to control my weight. This experience has assured me that I can never weigh 300 pounds as long as I have access to the right foods.

One thing about this diet is that you get used to having that full feeling by having very large servings of food. For me, the success of the diet largely rests on achieving that feeling. If I were to go off this diet, I would probably insist on large servings of food out of habit and I'd eat more high calorie food to feel full. Be aware of this because it's a real recipe for weight gain. It is the snake that waits.

Here's my food interrogation rundown on Phase Three:

Q: Do you ever eat bread?

A: Nope. But sometimes I have vegan pizza, and I suppose the crust is sorta breadish. And I had a Beyond Burger that had a bread bun.

Q: Do you ever cook with oil?

A: Nope. But maybe if I eat at a vegan restaurant.

Q: Do you ever eat meat?

A: Nope, but I take fish oil capsules every day. (it's literally oil, and oil is on the no list.)

Q: Do you ever drink milk?

A: Nope, never. Sometimes I'll mash some potatoes with almond milk.

Q: Do you ever eat cheese?

A: Nope, but I make cashew cheese and have a tiny bit of it on my salads.

Q: Do you ever eat excessive amounts of sugar?

A: Nope, but there is an unopened no-dairy coconut-based ice cream container in my freezer. I once had ginger tea sweetened with 3 medjool dates, and it was quite sweet.

Q: Do you ever eat chocolate?

A: Every damn day. Two or three squares of 90% cacao. It's expensive and it's not very sweet.

Q: Do you ever eat potato chips? No, but I there are some corn tortillas that are more of a whole food, and have a very small amount of sodium, and no added food chemicals. Look for a short and simple ingredients list. Try to avoid oil. Rice cakes made from brown rice are also good.

Q: Do you ever eat rice?

A: Sometimes. But never white rice.

Q: Do you ever eat beans?

A: Yeah fairly often. And lentils. Yes I fart a lot.

Q: Do you ever eat fruit?

A: Every day. But usually only at breakfast.

Q: Do you ever eat leafy green vegetables?

A: Every day, and then some.

Q: Do you ever cheat on the diet? (e.g. take a Rare & Appropriate)

A: No not really. Right now I eat too many corn tortilla chips. I've never broken down and pigged out on meat and junk food and I'm a half year into it. I'm not saying I won't, and if I do it will be Rare & Appropriate.

I am a believer in the Cray Ray diet, and it has changed the way I look at food. A sizzling steak tastes wonderful, and I am still somewhat wistful for one but I now view it very differently than before I started my whole food plant-based journey. Steak is like a snake that wants to bring back the bad old days. Part of me would like nothing more than a McCain's frozen chocolate cake, but it's the same deal: it's an open invitation to feeling bad again. Having a salad seems like a great idea for the taste of it. No, really! You haven't really lived until you've had steamed roasted mushroom slices (currently one of my favourite things.) Good lord, many people just don't know about this way of life, and some of them will be like me and notice a huge beneficial change. I think Cray Ray has done it: he's figured out a diet that works for a segment

of the population, and also figured out a two phase transition plan (with contrast showers and all) to get there. I don't know how big that segment of the population is but I can say that I am included in it. I am very aware that there are no words that could have convinced me to do this diet -- nobody could have sat me down and talked me into it. Nope. I was at the end of my rope with my weight and exercise and I was in an exasperated state of not knowing what I was going to do about it. There were a few words from Penn Jillette that helped push me in this direction: 'extreme', 'cult', and "dangerous." Hah. I guess it seemed like desperate times called for desperate measures.

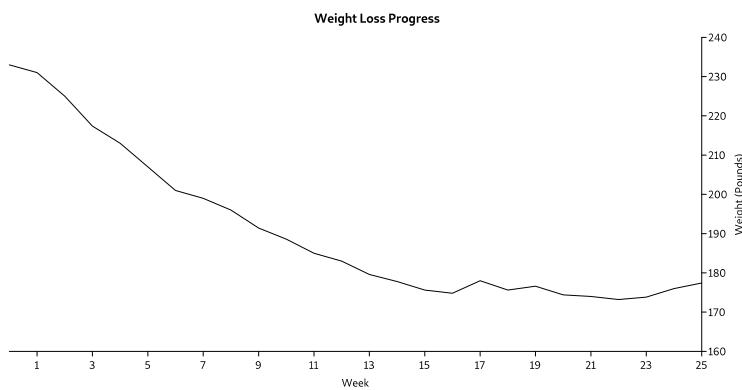
I know how difficult it is to agree to never have a steak again, or an ice-cream cone - and I explicitly haven't made that promise (and the Rare & Appropriate days help with this.) And I haven't hopped on the moral bandwagon of talking about the misery that eating meat and dairy causes in animals. However now that I don't eat meat, it is much easier to independently weigh the arguments. Making a decision on this issue becomes less consequential. I still wear a leather belt which is far from inconsequential to some vegans. I think the hardcore vegans are happy that I don't eat meat, but are perturbed that I haven't incorporated their moral position into my world view. It's just a lot to ask.

It is an interesting juxtaposition that meat-grown-in-a-vat is something a vegan can partake in, but someone on a Nutritarian diet cannot. Vegans can eat it because it causes no misery to animals, but Nutritarians cannot because the meat is still high in calories (and high in nutrients.) Many vegans wouldn't go for meat of any kind - some even eschew the fake stuff like Beyond Burgers because of the reminder of meat. However lab-grown meat would be useful for new vegans who are trying to transition to the lifestyle.

I was very skeptical when I started this diet, and now I can't help but want to

recommend this diet to everyone, but I know everyone's different and various medical conditions could make it an impossibility which is why I am *again* saying: talk to your doctor before starting this diet. I took to it like a fish in water, and maybe you can too. It's just so magical the way the diet becomes less about weight loss and more about feeling surprisingly good every day. I mean the weight loss is great, but feeling good is like gold. This is truly the best cult ever.

Here's where my weight has ended up at the time of this writing.



It's just natural that your weight will creep back up when you're eating more food and not exercising. And you'll learn where the new limits are in the consumption of food. At Christmas I had a couple of Tofurky roasts, basted with way too much Bragg's, and I totally neglected leafy greens in favour of potatoes and parsnips. I go to vegan restaurants and get ideas for meals, like the Mystical Bowl, a dish of rice, beans and greens. It's so good. So I'm not always eating a 100% whole food plant-based lifestyle, and when I don't it's going to be some form of vegan food instead of KFC. My journey continues and I hope yours does too.

Meal Chart

<u>Week No.</u>	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Dinner</u>
1	Potatoes	Potatoes	Potatoes
2	Potatoes	Potatoes	Potatoes
3		Salad #1	Dinner #1
4		Salad #1	Dinner #2
5		Salad #2	Dinner #3
6		Lunch #1	Dinner #4
7		Salad #3	Dinner #5
8		Salad #4b	Dinner #6
9		Salad #4b	Dinner #8
10		Salad #4b	Dinner #10
11		Salad #5	Dinner #11
12		Salad #5	Dinner #12
13		Salad #6	Dinner #13
14		Salad #7	Dinner #14
15		Salad #7	Dinner #15
16	Breakfast #1	Salad #7b	Dinner #15

Recipes

Dinner #1: Vegetable Stew
Dinner #2: Puerto Rican Beans with Slow-Cooked Kidney Beans
Dinner #3: Cauliflower & Chickpea Curry
Dinner #4: Mushroom & Bell Pepper Baked Beans
Dinner #5: Hot & Sour Soup
Dinner #6: Kidney Bean Stuffed Peppers
Dinner #7: Famous Garlic & Spinach Lentil Soup
Dinner #8: Soothing Sweet Potato & Beet Soup
Dinner #9: Spicy Steamed Vegetables
Dinner #10: Herbed Mashed Potatoes With Mushroom Ketchup
Dinner #11: Super Chili
Dinner #12: Eggplant Rollatini
Dinner #13: Tomato Carrot Brussel Sprout Soup
Dinner #14: Roasted Beet Casserole
Dinner #15: Black Bean Stuffed Peppers
Dinner #16: Brown Rice With Vegan Sausage & Steamed Vegetables
Dinner #17: Thanksgiving Lentil Loaf
Dinner #18: Three Ears Of Corn & Steamed Vegetables
Dinner #19: Perogies with Brown Rice & Steamed Vegetables
Dinner #20: Famous Asparagus & Pea Soup
Lunch #1: Mushroom Mutter Masala
Salad #1: Chopped Salad A-Go-Go
Salad #2: Spicy Zucchini Salad
Salad #3: Spinach & Beet Salad
Salad #4b: Reformed Herb Salad
Salad #5: Romaine Chopperoonni
Salad #6: Jamaican Jerk Salad
Salad #7: Toasted Chickpea & Yam Salad
Salad #7b: Famous Toasted Chickpea & Carrot Salad
Breakfast #1: Fifty-Fifty Daily Oatmeal & Fruit
Dessert #1: Pumpkin Squares with Macadamia Frosting

Dinner #1

Vegetable Stew

Ingredients:

- 1 small onion (minced)
- 1 clove garlic (minced)
- 2 ribs celery (minced)
- 1 carrot (minced)
- 1/4 cup low sodium vegetable broth
- 1 large onion (chopped)
- 1 ½ cups button mushrooms (sliced)
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 3 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 1 can diced tomatoes (no salt added)
- 2 medium carrots (chopped)
- 2 ribs celery (chopped)
- 2 Yukon gold potatoes (chopped)
- 1 can tomato sauce (no salt added)
- 1/2 tsp Kitchen Bouquet
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp corn starch
- 1 cup frozen peas

Preparation:

1. Mince the carrot, celery and small onion.
2. Saute this mixture in 1/4 cup of veggie broth until the onions go clear/translucent.
3. Add large chopped onion and continue cooking until liquid gets low. The browning of the onions adds flavour.
4. Add the sliced button mushrooms and cook on medium high until they lose their liquid.
5. Add the rosemary and Italian seasoning.
6. After a few minutes add the rest of the vegetable broth, tomatoes and tomato sauce.
7. Add all the carrots, celery, and potatoes and bring to a boil.
8. Add the Kitchen Bouquet, balsamic vinegar.
9. Turn down the heat to low and add the frozen peas.
10. Mix the corn starch with a tablespoon of cold water and stir it in to thicken. A little goes a long way.
11. Simmer to desired consistency.
12. Remove from heat.

To make this a 100% whole food plant-based recipe, remove the corn starch and the Kitchen Bouquet.

Dinner #2

Puerto Rican Beans

Ingredients:

- 2 red bell peppers (chopped)
- 2 green bell peppers (chopped)
- 2 white onions (chopped)
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 tbsp coriander
- 1 tbsp turmeric
- 1 tbsp oregano
- 1 tbsp cracked pepper
- 2 tbsp cumin
- 2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp chopped pickled jalapeños
- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- 4 potatoes cubed
- 2 cups water
- 1 pound slow-cooked kidney beans (cooked)

Preparation:

1. Water-saute the onion and the garlic until the onions become translucent.
2. Add the coriander, turmeric, oregano, pepper, cumin, paprika, and the bay leaves.
Cook for a few more minutes, adding water if the onions start to stick.
3. Add tomato paste, potatoes and pickled jalapenos and stir them in. Cook for a few more minutes to get the spices mixed in well with the potatoes.
4. Add beans, peppers, and water. Mix well.
5. Cover and cook for 30 minutes or until 99% of the water has boiled away.
6. Remove bay leaves.

Slow-cooked Kidney Beans

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds of dry kidney beans
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp cumin
- 2 tsp of Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids

Preparation:

1. Rinse beans.
2. Soak beans overnight in water. Watch out for overflow as beans will expand to 2 to 3 times their original size.
3. Drain water off of beans and rinse well.
4. Put beans in crockpot and cover with water until water is about 3 cm above beans.
5. Add onion powder and cumin.
6. Cover with lid and cook on high until it boils.
7. Turn down to low and cook for 4-5 hrs. Add more boiling water if needed.
8. Add Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids.

You'll notice that the recipe only calls for 1 pound of beans and we made 2 pounds. The other pound goes into sandwich bags in 1 ¼ cup portions along with 2-3 tbsp of the water they boiled in, and then put into the freezer.

Dinner #3

Cauliflower & Chickpea Curry

Ingredients:

- 1 white onion (chopped)
- 4 cloves of garlic (peeled)
- 1 chili
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 thumb size chunk of fresh ginger (chopped)
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 cup of low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1 bunch of coriander (just stems, chopped)
- 1 head of cauliflower (cut into small florets)
- 1 can of diced tomato (no salt added)
- 1 can of chickpeas (no salt added)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of low-sodium vegetable stock

Preparation:

1. Put the onion, garlic, chili, curry powder, turmeric, ginger, yellow pepper, 1 cup vegetable stock, and coriander in a food processor and make a paste.
2. Put paste in pot, and bring to a boil.
3. Add cauliflower, and 1 ½ cups vegetable stock, stir well and bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat to low and cover.
5. Cook for 30 minutes. If florets aren't tender enough, add more vegetable stock and continue simmering.
6. Remove from heat.

Dinner #4

Mushroom & Bell Pepper Baked Beans

Ingredients:

- 1 white onion (diced)
- 1 red pepper (diced)
- 1 green pepper (diced)
- 15 mushrooms (diced)
- 1 can diced tomato (no salt added)
- 2 garlic cloves (minced)
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp basil
- 1 tsp rosemary
- 2 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 cans of cannellini beans (rinsed)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-sodium vegetable stock
- 2 tsp cayenne pepper

Preparation:

1. Saute onions, peppers, and mushrooms in vegetable stock until onions are translucent.
2. Add tomato and garlic and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add coriander, basil, rosemary, paprikas, cumin, beans, cayenne pepper, and cover.
4. Cook for 20 minutes or until there's only a small amount of liquid.
5. Remove from heat.

Dinner #5

Hot & Sour Soup

This is a weekly recipe, where we make a soup base on the first day of the week and then use it to make a fresh soup for every night of the week.

Soup Base:

Ingredients:

- 10 wood ear mushrooms (dried, cut into stripes)
- 20 shiitake mushrooms (dried, chopped)
- 1 cup dried lily flowers (dried)
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1 can of bamboo shoots
- 1 tbsp ginger (minced)
- 1 tbsp low-sodium light soy sauce
- 1/2 tbsp low-sodium dark (or regular) soy sauce
- 1/2 cup cilantro (chopped)

Preparation:

1. Add vegetable stock to pot on low heat.
2. Rehydrate wood ear mushrooms in hot water for 1 hour.
3. Rehydrate shiitake mushrooms in hot water for 1 hour.
4. Rehydrate lily flowers in hot water for 1 hour.
5. Preserve soak water from shiitake mushrooms and lily flowers and add to pot.
(This makes about 9-10 cups of soup base. If you want more you can do more rehydrating or add more stock.)
6. Discard soak water from wood ear mushrooms.
7. Discard most of rehydrated shiitake mushrooms and lily flowers, save some for later.
8. Add wood ear mushrooms to the pot.
9. Add bamboo shoots, ginger, soy sauce, and cilantro.
10. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium high.
11. Cook for 5 minutes and then remove from heat.

Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 cups Hot & Sour soup base
- some lily flowers (dried)
(or use rehydrated ones from earlier)
- 5-6 shiitake mushrooms (dried, chopped)
(or use rehydrated ones from earlier)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Napa cabbage (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ carrot (chopped thinly)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ can corn (no salt added)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ can of peas (no salt added)
- 3-4 water chestnuts
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baby bok choy
- 4-5 florets of broccoli
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baby spinach
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Chinkiang vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp white pepper powder

Preparation:

1. Add soup base, lily flowers, shiitake mushrooms, carrot, corn, peas, water chestnuts to a small pot.
2. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer.
3. Cook for 25 minutes.
(This cooking time can be shorter if lily flowers and shiitake mushrooms are already rehydrated.)
4. Add broccoli, spinach, bok choy cabbage.
5. Cover and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Remove from heat, and add vinegar, white pepper and stir.

Dinner #6

Kidney Bean Stuffed Peppers

Ingredients:

- 2 yellow peppers (halved, seeds discarded)
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup kidney beans (cooked)
Use the kidney beans in your freezer from Dinner #2, or make a new batch of Slow-cooked kidney beans.
- 6-10 button mushrooms (finely chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ white onion (finely chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of diced tomato (from a can of no salt added diced tomatoes)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ can of corn
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp basil
- 1 tsp parsley
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tsp Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids
- 2 slices of canned beet (halved)

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. In a pot on medium heat add water, beans, mushrooms, onion, corn, tomato, garlic, thyme, basil and parsley.
3. Mix well and bring to a boil.
4. Remove from heat when water has disappeared.
5. Place pepper halves on baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
6. Place a half a slice of beet into the bottom of each pepper half.
7. Spoon the stuffing into each pepper half.
8. Refrigerate any extra stuffing for tomorrow.
9. Place in oven for 20-25 minutes.
10. Remove from oven and use an eyedropper to measure 3-5 drops of Bragg's on each half.

Dinner #7

Famous Garlic & Spinach Lentil Soup

When numbering dinners I skipped #7, so here's a bonus recipe that I enjoyed from much later on in Phase Three. It isn't a great recipe for Phase Two, because of the grain and fruit content, and watch out for the calorie content as this makes a single serving-bowl sized bowl of soup. If you want to stay truer to the diet you can reduce the lentils to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and remove the date entirely.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red lentils
- $\frac{1}{2}$ diced tomato (from a can of no salt added diced tomatoes)
- 1 tbsp of garlic powder
- 1 thai chili (stem removed, and serrated)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp chili powder
- 1 medjool date (pitted, and chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 1 celery rib (chopped)
- 4-5 florets of broccoli
- 4-5 pea pods (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red cabbage (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{5}$ cup of corn (from a no salt added can of corn)
- $\frac{1}{5}$ cup of peas (from a no salt added can of peas)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ red pepper (diced)
- 5-6 mushroom slices (roasted)
- 5 asparagus stalks (chopped)
Snap asparagus in half and discard the lower portion.

Preparation:

1. Soak date in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water for 10 mins.
2. Transfer date soak and date into pan on medium heat.
3. Add tomato, garlic, chili powder and thai chili.
4. Add 2 cups of water, lentils and turmeric to another pot on medium heat.
5. When the frying pan starts to boil, remove from heat and transfer to pot.
6. Steam broccoli, asparagus, cabbage, and chopped pea pods for 7 minutes.
7. Steam peas, corn, red pepper, and mushroom slices for 3 minutes.
8. Transfer steamed veggies to pot and mix well.
9. Add baby spinach to pot, cover for 5 minutes.
10. Stir well.
11. Remove thai chili.

Roasted Mushroom Slices

Ingredients:

- Two containers of pre-sliced mushrooms.

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Empty containers of mushrooms onto a single large baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Bake for 15 minutes.
4. Place clean baking sheet on top of mushrooms and flip baking sheets. Woo!
5. Remove parchment paper.
6. Bake for another 15 minutes.
7. Let stand to cool and then refrigerate.

Dinner #8

Soothing Sweet Potato & Beet Soup

Ingredients:

- 6 cups of low-sodium vegetable stock
- 3 beets (peeled and diced)
- 2 sweet potatoes (peeled and diced)
- 3 3/4 cups kidney beans (cooked)
Use 3 bags of kidney beans in your freezer from Dinner #2, or make a new batch of Slow-cooked kidney beans.
- 1 cup carrot (mandolin sliced)
- 1 cup celery (chopped)
- 1 cup yellow pepper (diced)
- ½ cup radish (mandolin sliced)
- ½ cup corn (from a can of no salt added corn)
- 1 ½ tbsp curry powder
- 1 ½ tbsp oregano
- 1 ½ tbsp coriander
- 2 tsp white pepper
- ¾ cup arugula (chopped)

Preparation:

1. Add everything except arugula to a pot and bring to a boil.
2. Transfer 2 cups to another small pot on medium heat.
3. Add arugula.
4. Cover and cook for 15 minutes.
5. Refrigerate the rest.

Dinner #9

Spicy Steamed Vegetables

Dinner #9 was originally the same as Dinner #10 but larger, so here's a bonus recipe for the standard spicy steamed vegetables. I could eat this particular recipe every day for years, and it is a side dish in many of these dinners.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red cabbage (chopped)
- 4-5 broccoli florets
- 4-5 pea pods (chopped)
- 4 ribs of celery (chopped into large chunks)
- 2 tbsp corn (from can of no salt added corn)
- 2 tbsp peas (from can of no salt added peas)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ red pepper (sliced)
- 8-9 mushroom slices (roasted)
See Dinner #8 for how to roast the mushroom slices.

Preparation:

1. Add 3 cups of water to a pot over medium heat.
2. In steaming basket, place the cabbage and cover.
3. After the water starts to boil add the broccoli, pea pods, and celery.
4. Cover and cook for 4 minutes.
5. Add corn, peas, pepper and mushroom.
6. Cover and cook for 3 minutes.
7. Remove from heat.
8. Dump basket into bowl and add regular Tobasco.

Dinner #10

Herbed Mashed Potatoes With Mushroom Ketchup

Ingredients:

- 2 russet potatoes (peeled and quartered)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp turmeric
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp white pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp sage
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp marjoram
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp basil
- 2 tbsp of mushroom ketchup

Preparation:

1. Put potatoes in a pot and cover with 3 cm of water.
2. Add herbs and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes.
4. Drain water
5. Add mushroom ketchup.
6. Mash well.

Add more mushroom ketchup for creamier potatoes.

Mushroom Ketchup

The idea here is to boil the heck out of some vegetables 7 spices and the liquid we're left with is what we're after. It's more of a salad dressing than the modern conception of ketchup.

Ingredients:

- 15 shiitake mushrooms (dried, chopped)
- 1 bay leaf
- $\frac{1}{2}$ red onion (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ radish (mandolin sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp peppercorns
- 1 cup water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 shakes Mrs. Dash (the lemon kind)
- 1 cup water

Preparation:

1. Add everything to a pot and bring to a boil.
2. Continue boiling for 10 minutes.
3. Add another 1 cup water.
4. Boil for 20 more minutes.
5. Remove from heat.
6. Strain, and keep liquid (which is what we're calling 'Mushroom Ketchup'.)
7. Let cool.
8. Press the remaining liquid from the mushrooms and keep that too.
9. Should result in 1 cup of mushroom ketchup. Refrigerate.

Dinner #11 Super Chili

This is a weekly recipe where we make a large batch and then remove enough for a bowl, add cabbage and cook that.

Ingredients:

- 2 white onions (chopped)
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- 3 cans diced tomatoes (no salt added)
- 1 can tomato paste
- 4 cups kidney beans (cooked)
3 bags from the freezer, or make more as shown in Dinner #2.
- kernels from 3 cobs of corn
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp onion powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red cabbage (diced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids

Preparation:

1. Water-saute onions, garlic, cumin, smoked paprika, turmeric, and onion powder until the onions become translucent.
2. Add in everything else except for the cabbage and the Bragg's.
3. Mix well and bring to a boil.
4. Remove from heat.
5. Transfer 1 ½ cups to a smaller pot. Let the remainder stand and then refrigerate.
6. Cook for 15 minutes on medium until much of the liquid boils away.
7. Add cabbage.
8. Cook for another 5 minutes or until the liquid is mostly gone, making sure not to burn.
9. Remove from heat.
10. Add a few drops of Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids with an eye-dropper.

Dinner #12

Eggplant Rollatini

Ingredients:

- 1 medium eggplant
- 1 red bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 white onion (chopped)
- 2 medium carrots (chopped)
- 3 ribs celery (diced)
- 4 cloves garlic (minced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup arugula, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baby kale, chopped
- 2 tsp Mrs. Dash (the chipotle kind)
- 3 cans of no salt added tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded Daiya faux-mozzarella cheese

Preparation:

1. Preheat Oven to 350 F.
 2. Slice the eggplant into quarter inch slices. (A mandoline slicer helps.)
 3. Place on a parchment paper lined baking sheet.
 4. Bake for 20 minutes. (This will make the eggplant pliable.)
 5. Remove from oven.
-
1. In a pot on medium heat, water-saute the onion and garlic until the onions become translucent.
 2. Add pepper, carrots, and celery and continue to water-saute for 5 minutes. Add water if needed.
 3. Add 2 cups of tomato sauce, arugula, kale and cook for 5 more minutes.
 4. Remove from heat.
-
1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
 2. In an 8x8 pan, pour 1/3 cup of tomato sauce to coat the bottom.
 3. Dunk each eggplant slice into the remaining tomato sauce.
 4. Put a couple of spoonfuls of vegetable stuffing on top of coated eggplant slice.
 5. Roll it up.
 6. Repeat until you run out of eggplant.
 7. Put vegetable mixture on top of rolled up eggplant.
Refrigerate remaining vegetable mixture for next time.
 8. Sprinkle Daiya cheese on top.
 9. Bake for 20 minutes.
 10. Remove from oven.

Dinner #13

Tomato Carrot Brussel Sprout Soup

This is a weekly recipe. The idea is to make a big pot of soup, transfer a bowl-sized portion to a small pot and then add brussel sprouts, arugula and more vegetables if it looks sparse. If you run out of liquid during the week, add more carrot juice.

Ingredients:

- 1 white onion (chopped)
- 5 cloves garlic (minced)
- 2 carrots (chopped)
- 2 golden beets (diced)
- 4 cups water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup green lentils
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red lentils
- kernels from 4 cobs of corn
- 1 can no-salt-added tomato sauce
- 2 cups carrot juice
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups kidney beans
Two bags from the freezer, or make a new batch as shown in Dinner #2.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp garam masala
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup arugula (chopped)
- 4-5 brussel sprouts (quartered)
- 3-4 pickled jalapenos
- 1 tbsp of Daiya faux-mozzarella cheese

Preparation:

1. Water-saute onion, garlic, cinnamon, garam masala in a large pot on medium heat.
2. Cook until onions become translucent.
3. Add carrots, beets, corn, and beans
4. Cook for 5 minutes adding more water if necessary.
5. Add water, lentils, tomato sauce, carrot juice.
6. Cook for 30-45 minutes.
7. Remove from heat.
8. Transfer 1 ¾ cups to a small bowl on medium heat and bring to a boil.
9. Add brussel sprouts and arugula and cover.
10. Cook for 5 minutes.
11. Remove from heat.
12. Put in a bowl and top with jalapenos and Daiya cheese.

Dinner #14

Roasted Beet Casserole

This is a weekly recipe, where we do a lot of cooking on day one, and then make bowl-sized portions by combining casserole, beet slices, and cauliflower cream at dinner time.

Ingredients:

- 2 beets
- 1 bag of frozen cubes of butternut squash (thawed)
- 1 daikon radish (peeled, sliced into $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times 3\text{cm}$ sticks)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch kale (chopped)
- 1 red onion (sliced)
- 1 cup brown rice
- 1 cup red lentils
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of kidney beans (cooked)
2 bags from the freezer, or make a new batch as shown in Dinner #2.
- 3 tbsp herbs de provence
- 1 cup portabello mushroom (diced)
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 4 parsnips (chopped)
- 3 tbsp carrot juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup green banana flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ground flax seeds
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chia seeds
- ground pepper
- 5 cups Cauliflower Cream Sauce

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
 2. Wrap beets in aluminum foil.
 3. Place on a baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes.
 4. After it has cooled, unwrap and discard foil.
 5. Peel and cut into slices.
-
1. In a small pot bring 3 cups of water to a boil.
 2. Add 1 cup of brown rice.
 3. Cover and cook for 20 minutes.
 4. Remove from heat and strain.
-
1. In a small pot bring 3 cups of water to a boil.
 2. Add 1 cup red lentils.
 3. Cover and cook for 20 minutes.
 4. Remove from heat and strain.
-
1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
 2. Add squash, onions, radish, and carrot juice to a dutch oven.
 3. Roast for 25 minutes.
 4. Add mushrooms, seasonings, banana flour, seeds, beans, rice, lentils.
 5. Mix well and roast for 20 minutes.
 6. Remove from oven.
-
1. Transfer 1 ½ cups to small oven-safe bowl.
 2. Pour some Cauliflower Cream Sauce on it and mix well.
 3. Top with beet slices.
 4. Bake again at 350 F for 15 minutes.
- Or if starting with refrigerated casserole, bake for 25-30 minutes.

Cauliflower Cream Sauce

Ingredients:

- 1 head of cauliflower (chopped)
- 2 cups carrot juice
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 3 cloves garlic (peeled)
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tsp white miso paste

Preparation:

1. Add the cauliflower, carrot juice, coconut milk, and garlic to a big pot, and bring to a simmer.
2. Cook for about 10 minutes, until the cauliflower is very soft.
3. Remove from heat. Let cool.
4. Transfer to blender.
5. Add nutritional yeast and miso paste.
6. Blend.
7. Transfer back to pot to boil down until desired thickness is reached.
8. Remove from heat.

Dinner #15

Black Bean Stuffed Peppers

This is similar to Dinner #6 but the taste is different.

Ingredients:

- 2 orange peppers (halved, seeds discarded)
- 1 ¼ cup black beans (cooked)
- 6-10 button mushrooms (finely chopped)
- ½ white onion (finely chopped)
- ¼ can of corn
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp basil
- 1 tsp parsley
- 1 tbsp dried epazote
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tsp Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. In a pot on medium heat add water, beans, mushrooms, onion, garlic, basil, parsley, and epazote.
3. Mix well and bring to a boil.
4. Remove from heat when water has disappeared.
5. Place pepper halves on baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
6. Spoon the stuffing into each pepper half.
7. Refrigerate any extra stuffing for tomorrow.
8. Place in oven for 20-25 minutes.
9. Remove from oven and use an eyedropper to measure 3-5 drops of Bragg's on each half.

Slow-cooked Black Beans with Epazote

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds of dry black beans
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 3 tbsp dried epazote
- 2 tsp of Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids

Preparation:

1. Rinse beans.
2. Soak beans overnight in water. Watch out for overflow as beans will expand to 2 to 3 times their original size.
3. Drain water off of beans and rinse well.
4. Put beans in crockpot and cover with water until water is about 3 cm above beans.
5. Add onion powder and epazote.
6. Cover with lid and cook on high until it boils.
7. Turn down to low and cook for 4-5 hrs. Add more boiling water if needed.
8. Add Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids.
9. Let stand and put 1 ¼ cup portions into sandwich bags with 2-3 tbsps of the water they were boiled in.
10. Store in freezer.

Dinner #16

Brown rice With Vegan Sausage & Steamed Vegetables

A fast recipe when you're nearing the end of your fed-window and don't have food.

Ingredients:

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup brown rice
- 1 vegan sausage (chopped)
Field Roast brand, Smoked Apple Sage
- ground pepper
- Mrs. Dash
- Tobasco

Preparation:

1. In a small pot, bring 3 cups of water to a boil.
2. Add brown rice, cover.
3. Cook for 15 minutes.
4. Add sausage
5. Cook for 5 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and strain.
7. Add steamed vegetables on top.
8. Top with ground pepper, Tobasco, and Mrs. Dash.

For the steamed vegetables see Dinner #9.

Dinner #17

Thanksgiving Lentil Loaf

This was a tricky one to get right.

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ tbsp flax meal
- 4 tbsp warm water
- 1 white onion (chopped)
- 2-3 garlic cloves (minced)
- 6-7 mushrooms (chopped)
- 1 cup carrots (diced)
- 1 cup celery (diced)
- 5-6 cups lentils (cooked from 2 cups raw)
- 1-2 tbsp fresh parsley
- 3 tbsp nutritional yeast
- 3 tbsp tomato paste (no salt added)
- 1 tsp dried sage
- 2 tbsp Thanksgiving turkey spices (Bell's Seasoning)
- 3 cups of rolled oats
- 2 tbsp Bragg's Liquid Amino Acids
- Low sodium Barbecue Sauce

Preparation:

1. Add warm water and flax meal to a small glass.
2. Stir and let sit for 20 minutes.

1. Water-saute onions and garlic on medium heat until onions become translucent.
2. Add mushrooms, carrots, and celery.
3. Cook for 10 minutes adding water if necessary.
4. Add sage, parsley, and turkey spices.
5. Mix well and cook for 5 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and transfer to large bowl.
7. Add nutritional yeast, tomato paste, Bragg's, and water & flax meal.
8. Also add lentils and mix well.
9. Transfer into a food processor and blend.
10. Preheat oven to 400 F.
11. Add 3 cups rolled oats to food processor (by itself.) and blend.
12. Mix oats with lentil mixture.

1. Line a loaf pan with 2 layers of parchment paper.
2. Transfer the mixture into the loaf pan (or two loaf pans.)
3. Brush some barbecue sauce on the top.
4. Bake at 15 minute intervals for 1 hour, basting barbecue sauce at each interval.
5. Remove from oven and let stand for 15 minutes.
6. Gently remove loaf from pan by turning it upside down, and remove paper.

If it doesn't "loafify" then add more oats next time. It took me three tries.

Dinner #18

Three Ears Of Corn & Steamed Vegetables

A cheap and easy one.

Ingredients:

- 3 ears of corn (shucked)

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil.
2. Add corn, and cover.
3. Cook for 6-7 minutes.
 Watch out for overcooking!
4. Remove from heat.
5. Let stand for 3 minutes.

There's no need to add any spices. Corn is good on its own.

For steamed vegetables see Dinner #9.

Dinner #19

Perogies with Brown Rice & Steamed Vegetables

Very similar to Dinner #16 but with Perogies instead of Vegan Sausage.

Ingredients:

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup brown rice
- 2 potato and onion perogies
(Farm Boy brand)
- ground pepper
- Mrs. Dash
- Tobasco

Preparation:

1. In a small pot, bring 3 cups of water to a boil.
2. Add brown rice, cover.
3. Cook for 15 minutes.
4. Add perogies.
5. Cook and cover for 5 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and strain.
7. Add steamed vegetables on top.
8. Top with ground pepper, Tobasco, and Mrs. Dash.

For the steamed vegetables see Dinner #9.

Dinner #20

Famous Asparagus & Pea soup

This is a weekly recipe. The idea is to make the soup base and then transfer to a small pot and make a bowl.

Soup Base:

Ingredients:

- 3 cups asparagus spears (chopped)
- 2 white onions (chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 3 cups water
- 3 cans peas (no salt added)
- 8 ribs of celery (chopped)
- 1 tbsp low-sodium vegetable stock
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp basil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp marjoram
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp rosemary
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sage
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp thyme
- ground pepper

Preparation:

The idea here is to fill up your dutch oven with equal amounts of asparagus and peas, and a lesser amount of onions and celery in equal proportion.

1. Add vegetable stock, onions, garlic and asparagus to dutch oven on medium heat.
2. Cook until onions are translucent. Add more vegetable stock if it boils away.
3. Add celery and spices and cook for 5 minutes or until celery reduces in size.
4. Add peas and water.
5. Bring to a boil.
6. Reduce heat to a simmer.
7. Cook for 15-25 minutes.
(Let the water boil away)
8. Remove from heat.
9. Let stand for 5 minutes.
10. Transfer to blender.
11. Blend well.
12. Transfer to large freezer bags.
13. Store in freezer.

Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of soup base
- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup of steamed vegetables
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp paprika
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp white pepper
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp onion powder
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp dried oregano
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp cumin
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp chili powder

Preparation:

1. Add soup base and water to a small pot on medium heat.
2. Add spices.
3. When steamed vegetables are ready, dump them in.
4. Mix well.
5. Remove from heat.

See Dinner #9 for Steamed Vegetables.

Lunch #1

Mushroom Mutter Masala

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 red onion (grated with large side of box grater)
- 1 cup white button mushrooms (thickly sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp powdered coriander
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp powdered cumin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp red cayenne pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of frozen peas
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of green beans

Preparation:

1. Water-saute the cumin seeds until they begin to sizzle.
2. Add in onion and cook until the onion begins to turn softly golden.
3. Add in the mushrooms and mix well.
4. Stir in the powdered coriander, cumin, red cayenne pepper, black pepper with the green peas and green beans.
5. Mix well.
6. Cover and cook for five minutes.
7. Remove from heat.

Salad #1

Chopped Salad A-Go-Go

A quick and easy salad that fills a regular-sized bowl.

Ingredients:

- 4-5 button mushrooms (sliced)
- 1 white mushroom (sliced)
- 4-5 carrot slices
- 1 miniature cucumber (sliced into rounds and halved)
- 1 rib of celery (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ green pepper (diced)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced tomatoes (from a can of no salt added diced tomatoes)
- white vinegar
- Mrs. Dash (Garlic & Herb) (optional)
- Jalapeno Tobasco

Preparation:

1. Dump it all into a bowl. Mix well.
2. Douse with vinegar and Tobasco.
3. Don't over-do it because you don't want to completely overwhelm the flavour of the vegetables.
4. Add diced tomatoes in a pile in the centre.
5. Add Mrs. Dash on top of the tomatoes.

Salad #2

Spicy Zucchini Salad

Ingredients:

- 6 zucchini slices (mandolin sliced)
- 5 french beans (chopped)
- 2 sugar snap peas (chopped)
- 4 cherry tomatoes
- 12 bean sprouts
- 1 green onion (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ radish (mandolin sliced)
- 5 button mushrooms (chopped)
- 1 broccoli floret
- 1 tbsp corn niblets (from can of no salt added corn)
- 3 baby carrots (mandolin sliced)
- Jalapeno Tobasco
- Ground pepper

Preparation:

1. Put everything in a regular-sized bowl except for zucchini and sprouts, and mix well.
2. Add zucchini and sprouts.
3. Dress with Tobasco and pepper.

Salad #3

Spinach & Beet Salad

This is a good-looking and good-tasting salad served on a square plate.

Ingredients:

- 1 big handful of baby spinach
- 4 beets slices (halved)
From a can of beets, and a no salt added can is hard to find.
- 3 green beans (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ radish (mandolin sliced)
- 4-5 mushrooms (chopped)
- 1 green onion (chopped)
- 1 tbsp corn niblets (from a no salt added can of corn)
- 1 baby carrot (mandolin sliced)
- 4 grape tomatoes
- 4 rings of red pepper
- balsamic vinegar
- jalapeno Tobasco

Preparation:

1. Make a bed of spinach on a plate.
2. Add the 4 rings of pepper in a square formation.
3. Inside each ring goes an even amount of mushroom, beet, and tomatoes.
4. In the centre of the salad make a small pile of radish, onion, corn, and carrot.
5. Drizzle balsamic vinegar.
6. Add Tobasco to the mushrooms and beets.

Salad #4b

Reformed Herb Salad

Ingredients:

- a handful of baby spinach
- 1 tomato (sliced into wedges)
- 1 miniature cucumber (diagonally sliced)
- 1 baby carrot (mandolin sliced)
- 1 radish (mandolin sliced)
- 1 mushroom (chopped)
- 1 tbsp corn niblets (from a can of no salt added corn)
- sherry vinegar dressing
- plum vinegar
- 1 tsp dried parsley
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp basil
- ground pepper

Preparation:

1. Soak miniature cucumber slices in plum vinegar for 10 minutes.
2. Put spinach and other vegetables into a large serving bowl. Mix well.
3. Add spices.
4. Dress with sherry vinegar dressing and ground pepper.

Sherry Vinegar Dressing

Buy a ketchup squirt bottle (the kind with a tiny cap on top) to store this dressing.

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove (finely minced)
The garlic needs to be able to fit through the small hole in your ketchup bottle.
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water

Preparation:

1. Add ingredients to a ketchup bottle. Close lid.
2. Shake well.
3. Refrigerate.

Salad #5

Romaine Chopperoni

Ingredients:

- ½ heart of romaine lettuce (chopped)
- 1 pearl onion (chopped)
- 5 pea pods
- 6 grape tomatoes
- 2 rings of yellow pepper
- pea sprouts
- 1 miniature cucumber (diced)
- 1 brown mushroom (chopped)
- 1 tbsp corn niblets (from a can of no salt added corn)
- balsamic vinegar
- jalapeno Tobasco

Preparation:

1. In a large serving bowl, place the romaine, onion, cucumber, corn, and peas.
2. Add the two rings of yellow pepper.
3. Dress with balsamic vinegar.
4. Inside each ring, place equal parts of mushroom and tomatoes.
5. Sprinkle pea sprouts on top.
6. Dress with Tobasco.

Salad #6

Jamaican Jerk Salad

Ingredients:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ white onion (sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ portabello mushroom (sliced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ red pepper (sliced)
- 8 pea pods
- $\frac{1}{2}$ rib of celery (diced)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ zucchini (diced)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp white pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp red cayenne pepper
- 3 tsp balsamic & fig blend vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low sodium spicy salsa
- $\frac{1}{2}$ heart of romaine (chopped)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup arugula (chopped)
- some alfalfa sprouts
- 1 miniature cucumber (diced)
- Tobasco

Preparation:

1. Put the spices and vinegar in a Ziploc bag with onion, mushroom, red pepper, peas, celery, and zucchini.
2. Close bag and shake well.
3. Saute contents for 5 minutes.
4. Add salsa. Mix well.
5. Cook for 2 minutes.
6. Remove from heat.
7. In a large serving bowl, add romaine lettuce, arugula, sprouts, cucumber.
8. Mix well.
9. Dress with Tobasco.
10. Dump sauteed vegetables on top.

Salad #7

Toasted Chickpea & Yam Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 Beauregard Sweet Potato (peeled and diced)
This variety is used because they're small.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup zucchini (diced)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup celery (diced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ white onion (diced)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chickpeas (from can of no salt added chickpeas)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baby spinach (chopped)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup arugula (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pea microgreens (chopped)
- 4 white mushrooms (sliced)
- 1 green onion (chopped)
- 1 miniature cucumber (seeds removed, diced)
- 4 pea pods (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup corn (from can of no salt added corn)
- 4 tbsp white vinegar
- 2 tbsp Tobasco sauce
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp chili powder
- ground pepper

Preparation:

1. Put water in a pan on medium heat.
 2. Add zucchini, celery, onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic, and ground pepper to it.
 3. Cook for 35 minutes, stirring occasionally.
 4. Remove from heat.
-
1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
 2. Put sweet potato and chickpeas on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
 3. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder and chili powder.
 4. Bake for 15 minutes.
 5. Rearrange sweet potatoes and chickpeas.
 6. Bake for 15 minutes.
 7. Remove from oven.
-
1. Add microgreens, cucumber, green onion, peas, corn, spinach and arugula to a large serving bowl.
 2. Mix salad well.
 3. Add vinegar, Tobasco, nutritional yeast and ground pepper.
 4. Add layer of sliced mushrooms.
 5. Put sweet potato and toasted chickpeas on top of mushrooms.
 6. Put sauteed vegetables on top of that.
 7. Add Tobasco and ground pepper on top.
 8. Let salad sit for a couple of minutes.

Salad #7b

Famous Toasted Chickpea & Carrot salad

This is very similar to salad #7. Omit the cashew cheese if you're on Phase Two.

Ingredients:

- 1 carrot (diced)
- ½ cup water
- 1 white zucchini (diced)
This variety is used because they are small.
- ¾ cup celery (diced)
- ½ white onion (diced)
- ½ cup chickpeas (from can of no salt added chickpeas)
- 1 ½ cup baby spinach (chopped)
- 1 ½ cup arugula (chopped)
- ½ cup pea microgreens (chopped)
- 4 white mushrooms (sliced)
- 1 green onion (chopped)
- 1 miniature cucumber (seeds removed, diced)
- 4 pea pods (chopped)
- ¼ cup corn (from can of no salt added corn)
- 4 tbsp white vinegar
- 2 tbsp Tobasco sauce
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp cashew cheese
- ground pepper

Preparation:

1. Put water in a pan on medium heat.
 2. Add carrot, zucchini, celery, onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic, and ground pepper to it.
 3. Cook for 35 minutes, stirring occasionally.
 4. Remove from heat.
-
1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
 2. Put chickpeas on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
 3. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder and chili powder.
 4. Bake for 15 minutes.
 5. Rearrange chickpeas.
 6. Bake for 15 minutes.
 7. Remove from oven.
-
1. Add microgreens, cucumber, green onion, peas, corn, spinach and arugula to a large serving bowl.
 2. Mix salad well.
 3. Add vinegar, Tobasco, nutritional yeast and ground pepper.
 4. Add a layer of mushroom slices, such that the underside of each slice has a tiny dab of cashew cheese.
 5. Put toasted chickpeas on top of mushrooms.
 6. Put sauteed vegetables on top of that.
 7. Add Tobasco and ground pepper on top.
 8. Let salad sit for a couple of minutes.

Cashew Cheese

Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ cup raw cashews nuts
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast, plus more to taste
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 3 tbsp cashew soak water
- 1 tbsp dried parsley

Preparation:

1. Soak cashews in 1 cup of hot water for 1 hour.
2. Retain soak water.
3. Put cashews into food processor.
4. Add 1 tsbp soak water, lemon juice, nutritional yeast, garlic powder, and parsley.
5. Blend for 30 seconds 10-15 times, scraping down the sides in between.
6. Add more soak water until it reaches the consistency of wanting to stick together as a single mass.
7. Remove cashew mixture, and divide into two on two J-Cloths.
8. Twist the cloth so that moisture is removed.
9. Put into sandwich bags. Refrigerate one, freeze the other.
10. After 4 hours, remove J-Cloth.

Breakfast #1

Fifty-Fifty Daily Oatmeal & Fruit

This recipe is such a throwback. You might think you don't like oatmeal, but anybody could like this.

Ingredients:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup old fashioned rolled oats
Not quick, not instant, not steel cut.
- 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- 1 apple (peeled and diced)
- 1 banana (chopped)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp crushed walnuts
- 1 tbsp flax meal
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sultan raisins
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup frozen fruit
Typically raspberries, cherries, blueberries.

Preparation:

1. In a small pot add water, cinnamon, and vanilla and bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat to medium.
3. Add oats, and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add frozen fruit, and cook for 2 minutes.
5. Add apple.
6. Turn off heat and cover. Let sit for 15 minutes.
Leave the pot on the element as it cools down.
7. Add banana, walnuts, flax and raisins.
8. Mix well.

Dessert #1

Pumpkin Squares With Macadamia Frosting

Ingredients:

- 10 medjool dates (pitted and diced
 - about 1 cup)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup banana flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 cans pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground cloves
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened unflavoured almond milk
- 1 cup Macadamia Frosting

Preparation:

1. Soak medjool dates for 30 minutes in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water.
 Retain soak water.
2. Preheat oven to 375 F.
3. Puree rolled oats.
4. Add oats, flour and pumpkin spices to a large bowl.
5. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of date soak water and almond milk.
6. Add pumpkin puree.
7. Mix well.
8. Place the mixture in a 8x8 baking pan lined with parchment paper.
9. Bake for 45 minutes.

Macadamia Frosting

Ingredients:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup macadamia nuts
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 6 medjool dates (pitted and diced)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Preparation:

1. Soak the dates in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water for 30 minutes.
 Retain soak water.
2. Soak the nuts in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water for 1 hour.
 Discard soak water.
3. Load the half of the date soak water, dates, nuts, vanilla to a food processor.
4. Puree. Scrape down the walls. Repeat many times.
5. Add more date soak water to thin it out.
6. Puree again. (The finer you make it, the better it is.)
7. Refrigerate for 4 hours.